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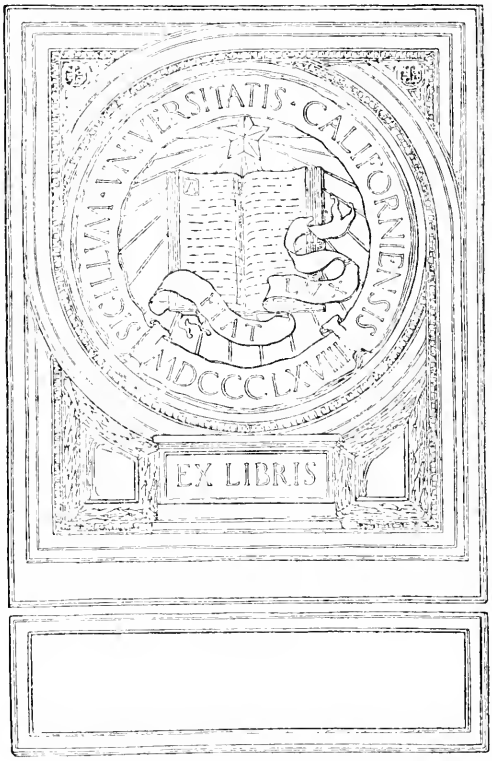

THE

STATE OF THE NATION,

AT THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR 1822.

CONSIDERED UNDER

THE FOUR DEPARTMENTS

OF

THE FINANCE—FOREIGN RELATIONS—
HOME DEPARTMENT—
COLONIES AND BOARD OF TRADE,
&c. &c. &c.

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STATE OF THE NATION, &c.

THE purport of the following observations is to take a general review of the state of public affairs, from the period of the late treaties to the commencement of the year 1822. The circumstances which compose this review have not, as yet, been produced to the public with sufficient fulness and distinctness. If some of the matters have been touched upon, and even discussed in parliament, in answer to the observations of the opponents of his Majesty's ministers, they have been discussed only as single measures, and without any reference to their coherence with the system of administration of which they formed a part.

The ministers of a free and high-minded country cannot be without a due feeling of the value of public character. They know, that in public station, still more than in private life,

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a good name is connected with the due and effective performance of duties; that character is influence, and that influence is power; that power from influence will extend its operation, where power from law and positive authority cannot reach; and that the good-will of the people towards government, has in all ages proved the readiest means of an effective administration. Under these considerations, his Majesty's ministers for themselves, and their friends for them, must naturally desire to stand well in public opinion. They desire it for themselves, and they desire it for the country. For themselves, they must feel that they deserve public confidence for a conscientious and effective discharge of their duties: for the country, they must desire, and desire most anxiously, that a general feeling for the public good, and a general persuasion that the government is industriously occupied in pursuing it, may excite such a spirit of concurrent effort between the people and their governors, as to give manners the effect and authority of laws; and may bring into disuse any statutes, if such there be, required in more turbulent times to repress public disorders. Such is the general purpose of the statement and review which follow.

According to the form which the administration of the British empire has long assumed, the public business has for a considerable period of years distributed itself into the four main departments—of Finance, the Foreign Affairs, Home Department, and the Colonies. Under the first of these departments, that of the Finance, the First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have it in charge to provide for the maintenance and due distribution of the public revenue, and for the integrity of all those sources of navigation, commerce, manufactures, internal trade and industry, from which such revenue must be derived; and, finally, (in co-operation with the other Boards appointed for this special service), they have to provide for the naval and military defence of the empire, and the maintenance of the docks, arsenals, ordnance, &c. in all the means and materials of future operation.

To the Home Department belong the maintenance and supervision of the public peace, and the due execution of the laws for the support of internal order and tranquillity; whilst the Departments of Foreign Affairs and the Colonies embrace, according to their denominations, our relations with foreign

states and our own colonies. Following the order of these departments, it is now proposed to produce and explain to the public, in a general and succinct view, the former, and the actual condition of each; the difficulties which his Majesty's ministers had to encounter, and what, under such difficulty, they have accomplished; how they have administered the finance, and conciliated the due maintenance of the revenue in all its sources, with the due alleviation of the public burthens; how they have maintained the public peace with as little cost as possible to personal liberty; and under what system they have administered the foreign relations of the empire. This review, under the four departments, will necessarily comprehend a general survey of the proceedings of administration within the whole compass of public business. It will explain the state of our finances, and our national resources; it will open a view of our existing relations with foreign states; it will display, as a part of our domestic policy, the general system under which his Majesty's ministers have endeavoured, more by discipline than by measures of terror and menace, to restore Ireland to the ordinary administration of law. It will shew what has been

done for our colonies, and for the commercial interests of the empire; and what is now in discussion for the extension of our trade and manufactures, and for simplifying and facilitating mercantile business.

FINANCE.

Upon the conclusion of the war, and the consequent return of many branches of industry to those foreign nations, for whom we carried and manufactured during the period of hostilities, his Majesty's ministers saw that a twofold duty had devolved upon them—the one, that of considering the amount of the national debt and the pressure of the annual taxation, and, under this consideration, relieving the country by making every possible saving in the public expenditure; the other, that of considering the actual condition of the trading part of the community under the contracted compass of trade in the different circumstances of peace and war—and, under these circumstances, not adding to the difficulties of a large body of men by withdrawing suddenly too great a portion of the national capital. From the

conclusion of the war to the present period, his Majesty's ministers have accordingly directed their steady attention to this object, so qualified; namely, to such a reduction of the annual burthens as might in its degree be consistent with the due maintenance of the public service—and, in its mode, not discharge with a dangerous precipitancy too large a portion of the circulating capital of the kingdom,

Under these circumstances, the inquiry into the financial conduct of his Majesty's ministers appears naturally to divide itself into the two points:—

First, what reductions have been made by them in the annual expenditure and taxation of the country from the conclusion of the war to the present period;—whether the public service could admit of any further reductions than those actually made; and whether they have not been carried into effect at the first practicable opportunity.

Secondly, what is the actual state of the main sources of the national revenue and public wealth—whether they are entire and unimpaired; and whether they justify a confidence for the present, and a strong expectation for the future.

The examination of the question in these

subdivisions will produce the whole subject fairly and fully before the public, and will enable the British people to determine, whether, in the administration of the finances, his Majesty's government have performed their duty, and have accomplished as much as could reasonably be expected under the circumstances of the country.

First, therefore, *what reductions have been made by his Majesty's ministers, in the annual expenditure and taxation of the country, from the conclusion of the war to the present period.*

Upon the conclusion of the war, in 1815, the first and anxious consideration of his Majesty's ministers was to make such a reduction in the establishments, as might be consistent with the security of the empire and its station among European powers. In considering this question, the immediate subject of inquiry was, the general basis upon which the future peace establishment should be estimated. The peace establishment of 1792 naturally suggested itself to their consideration. As in all political questions it is not only matter of prudence and policy, but contributes much to the facility of business, to proceed according to some acknowledged rule, his Majesty's ministers adopted this estimate in the first in-

stance; subject, however, to the qualifications rendered necessary by a new state of things, and by an actual knowledge (which they personally possessed) that Mr. Pitt himself had often regretted that he had taken the establishment of 1792 at too low a scale, and was therefore obliged to augment it in time of peace. With these qualifications, his Majesty's ministers adopted the peace estimate of 1792.

Having assumed this basis, the next process was to consider in what respect the general state of the nation, and its relations with the other powers of Europe on the conclusion of the war, differed from the condition of the country in 1792; and what augmentation was necessary for the new circumstances severally considered. The new peace establishment, whatever it might be, was to be distributed through the four branches—of Great Britain, Ireland, and the old and new Colonies. In Great Britain, in 1792, the peace establishment was 17,000 men. Now, in the condition of Great Britain at the conclusion of the war, there were two main circumstances which essentially distinguished her situation from that of 1792. Her great increase of population, amounting at least to one-fifth; and, without intending to express any doubt

of the loyalty and patriotism of the great body of this happy country, it must be added, that there was assuredly somewhat of a new state of the public mind, and a new force given to public passions, in the peculiar form which the press of that day had already assumed. There was yet a third, and fourth circumstance, in the enlarged basis and frame-work of the army and navy themselves, and in the new system of relieving foreign garrisons, so happily adopted; that of relieving by regiments, instead of drafts. Under the collective effect of these several circumstances, his Majesty's ministers were led into the necessary conclusion, that an augmentation of at least one-third of the establishment of 1792 was necessary for the home-establishment in Great Britain in 1816. They accordingly took this estimate, namely, 25,000 men, as the immediate peace establishment of England.

The next consideration was the establishment of Ireland. In 1792, the amount of this establishment had been taken at 12,000 men. The strong and concurrent representations of the Irish government and magistracy convinced his Majesty's ministers, that at least double this number was now necessary for the security of personal property, for the collection of the revenue, and for the due support of

the laws and authorities. Owing to the long period of war, 36,000 men had been constantly maintained in that kingdom, and had found sufficient occupation in guarding her domestic peace. At the very period when his Majesty's ministers were considering this question of the future establishment for Ireland, there were no less than four hundred military quarters or stations distributed through the Irish counties; and daily representations were made to the government, upon the temporary removal of any of them, that the persons and property of the protestant inhabitants were endangered. Under these circumstances, his Majesty's ministers took the future peace establishment for Ireland at 25,000 men.

The consideration next in order was the establishment of the Old Colonies. In 1792 the allowance for this portion of the empire was 17,000 men. Upon investigating this part of our establishment, it was immediately seen, that the colonies likewise presented an aspect very different from their condition in 1792. The Old Colonies were Gibraltar, the North American Colonies (Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Bahama Islands), Jamaica, and the Leeward islands. In 1792 the force there stationed was 17,000; but, upon looking at the state of each severally, it

was seen that an addition was now required. In 1792 the force at Gibraltar was 4000 men. This was deemed sufficient for 1816. In the North American colonies, Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, the force in 1792 was 5000 men. From the new circumstances of Canada, and from its new relations with the United States, it was necessary to increase this force; and upon consulting with military men acquainted with the frontiers and the nature of the country, it was found that a great addition was now necessary for the security of British North America. It was particularly represented to his Majesty's ministers under this head, by the local authorities, that the navigation of the Canadian rivers was often interrupted for months together; and that, upon any sudden breach with America, concurring with an insufficient force in Canada, the country might be overwhelmed by an incursion, before the possible arrival of troops from remote stations. They were further reminded of its growing importance to the commerce, and particularly to the navigation, of the united empire; and it was recalled to their recollection, that the vessels employed in our trade with Canada amounted to nearly one-fourth of the tonnage of the British empire. Under these circumstances, the estimate for the

North American colonies was taken at 9000 men. In 1792, the force at Jamaica was about 2000 men. But in its present condition, there were two strong additional circumstances: the first, the growth of the black state of Hayti in its immediate vicinity; and the second, the growth of the colony itself, and the anxious representations of the colonists of their state of insecurity with an insufficient force. As respected the progressive growth of the colony, and its actual importance to the general trade of the empire, it was represented to ministers, that the British capital employed in Jamaica exceeded sixty millions; and that in the year 1815 the island had exported ninety-eight thousand hogsheads of sugar; that this had employed twenty-one thousand tons of British shipping, and five thousand British seamen, and had afforded two millions to the revenue of the country; a sum amounting to within half a million of the ordinary charge of the whole army of England. Upon this representation the new estimates for Jamaica were taken at four thousand men. The force for the Leeward Islands in 1792, had been four thousand two hundred men. Under the same circumstances of the vicinity of a new black empire, of the progressive growth of the colonies, and of the establishment of some naval docks

and arsenals not immediately removable, the estimate for these islands was now taken at five thousand men. The whole colonial estimate for the Old Colonies was thus settled, in the first instance, at twenty-three thousand; a peace establishment exceeding that of 1792, for the same stations, by seven thousand men: an addition resting upon the principles above explained, of the growth of the colonies themselves, and of the progress of adjoining states.

The final consideration, as to the estimates for the new peace establishment, regarded the New Colonies. In 1792, the number of our colonies was only twenty-six. In 1816, they had increased to forty-three. These new colonies were—Malta, the Ionian islands, the African settlements, St. Helena, Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, Surinam, Trinidad, Berbice, Essequibo, St. Lucie, and Tobago. The estimates of 1792 of course afforded no rule for the future establishment of these colonies. But another criterion naturally suggested itself; that of the force which the former possessors of those colonies deemed to be necessary for their defence and administration. According to this measure, their collective peace establishment was thus primarily taken at twenty-three thousand men. Ministers saw indeed, that the same amount of force

would not always be necessary for this service; but that portions might be withdrawn gradually, as the colonists became accustomed to the superior administration of British laws. But as all these colonies were conquests, and as the greater part of them had experienced the contagion of French revolutionary principles; as the inhabitants of nearly all were at that time adverse; and as the greater portion were impatient, turbulent, and even democratically inclined, it was deemed necessary to take the estimate at the above standard.

Upon these principles, the total peace establishment was taken at 99,000 men; thirty thousand of which (twenty-three thousand for the New Colonies, and seven thousand for the new mode of relieving distant garrisons by regiments instead of by drafts) were required for services entirely new, and not having any existence in 1792. Thirteen thousand more of this number were required, in the unanimous opinion of all parties, as an addition to the former establishment for Ireland, and two thousand for Jamaica, under her new relation of neighbourhood to Hayti. With these deductions, it will be immediately seen that there was a very near correspondence in the estimates for the two periods of 1792, and 1816. The main and indeed the sole difference was

in the small addition to Canada and the Leeward Islands; the actual addition to the home force in Great Britain being chiefly for the relief by regiments to our remote garrisons.

As such were the reductions made in the army with respect to the number of men to be retained in pay and service, the reduction proposed, and afterwards executed within the year, for the navy, was still more considerable. The peace establishment was here taken at thirty-three thousand men, being an immediate reduction of upwards of seventy thousand; and, including the public yards connected with this service, of upwards of one hundred thousand men. The result of the reduction in these two heads of the public service was briefly, that before the end of the year of 1816, and before the meeting of the session of parliament for the year following, upwards of three hundred thousand soldiers and sailors had been disembodied and discharged from the public service. From the end of 1814, the earliest moment from which it was possible to commence the work of retrenchment, two hundred and twenty-one thousand eight hundred men had been disbanded from the regular force. And in the year 1816, this amount of reduction was augmented by a further discharge of fifty-six thousand three hundred and forty-three men, dis-

banded before the conclusion of that year. In the speech by which the session of 1816 was opened, his present Majesty had commanded the commissioners to assure the parliament, that they might rely on every disposition upon his part to concur in such measures of economy as might be found consistent with the security of the country, and with the station which we occupy in Europe. In this manner did his Majesty's ministers redeem this pledge of public economy and reduction in the establishments. Considering the magnitude of force upon which reductions were to be made; the variety and complexity of the interests concerned; the number and remoteness of the stations; the diminution of demand upon the trade and commerce of the country; and the general stagnation consequent upon the first transition from war to peace; it is assuredly not too much to assert, that in such an interval of time, and from such a national force, no period of our history exhibits such an amount of reduction.

As such was the reduction of the number of men in the naval and military service, it was attended, as a matter of course, by a similar diminution in the yearly supplies for these services. It would be impertinent to the present purpose of these remarks to repeat in detail the estimates of past years; the object is briefly

to establish the first position of our statement; that his Majesty's ministers have made all possible reductions in the public expenditure, and commenced such reductions at the first possible period. Suffice it therefore to add, as regards the supplies of the year 1816, that, when compared with the estimates of the previous year, the public expenditure was reduced by upwards of seventy millions. In the three branches, the Army, Navy, and Ordnance, nearly forty millions were at once struck off. As respected the burthens of the country, eighteen millions of taxes were repealed within the same year; a sum exceeding the whole of the national revenue, before the war, by two millions. Under all these circumstances, it is assuredly but justice to his Majesty's ministers to acknowledge, that in the arrangement of the peace establishment at the end of the war, and in the amount and promptitude of the reductions, they satisfied every reasonable expectation. Nor should it be forgotten under this part of the subject, that they raised the whole supply of the year, still necessarily large, (twenty-seven millions), without the imposition of any new taxes, and by the sole aid of an advantageous bargain with the Bank of England.

Having laid this ground-work for the future

peace establishment in 1816, it will immediately appear, that his Majesty's ministers have followed up the same plan of economy and reduction to the present period.

Upon this principle they continued progressively to reduce the amount of the public expenditure. In 1816, the estimate for the army was taken at 99,000 men. In the year 1817, the colonies newly attached to our empire having become more firmly settled, and the internal tranquillity of Ireland assuming a more promising aspect, this estimate was reduced to 81,000, being a reduction of nearly 18,000 men. In the year 1816, the number of men taken as the estimate for the Navy, was 33,000. For the year 1817, the estimate was reduced to 19,000, a reduction of nearly one half, or 14,000 men, from the former amount. In the supplies, there was the same earnest and zealous reduction, and ready and sincere economy. In 1816, the supply of the Army for this first year of the peace establishment had been taken at 10,564,000. For the year 1817, the supply was taken at a small excess beyond nine millions; a reduction of nearly two millions in this branch only. In 1816, the supply for the Navy was taken at 9,434,000. In 1817, this supply was reduced to six millions. The Ordnance for 1816, exceeded

one million and a half. For 1817, it was reduced by nearly half a million. The miscellaneous for 1816, had been estimated at two millions and a half. For 1817, it was reduced to seventeen hundred thousand pounds. The total supply for 1816, had exceeded twenty-seven millions. For 1817, the total supply was a small excess above twenty-two millions, being a reduction of five millions upon the expenditure of the year. Such therefore, were the further reductions made in the year 1817, beyond those of 1816. The army was reduced from 99,000 to 81,000 men. The navy was reduced from 33,000 to 19,000. The expense of the army was reduced from eleven millions to nine millions. The expense of the navy was reduced from ten to six. The Ordnance was reduced nearly one fourth in its whole expenditure. The miscellaneous more than one third, and the whole annual expenditure was reduced by one fifth.

As respects the Ways and Means of the same year, it may be sufficient to state without entering into a minute financial detail, that about nine millions and a half of the supply of this year were raised from the ready-money sources annually at the disposal of government; such as the annual duties, lotteries, old stores, &c.

that the remaining twelve millions were raised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on exchequer bills, instead of a loan; and this issue was made upon such advantageous terms, as to save Government nearly half a million in the computed difference between the interest of exchequer bills and the expense of a loan. By a most acute and assiduous attention to the state of the money-market, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had relieved it in due time, by paying off twenty-seven millions out of forty-two of the floating unfunded debt; and having thus left fifteen millions only in the market, he was enabled to raise the twelve millions required for the service of the year by the cheap and easier process of exchequer bills, instead of loan. The effect of this vigilant attention to the money-market, on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the above measure, which arose from it, was such an improvement in the state of the public credit, that the stocks, which in 1816, had been generally at 62, had risen to 74 in the commencement of the year 1817; being an improvement of 12 per cent. on the hundred pounds stock, and of nearly 20 upon the hundred pounds sterling. Exchequer bills, which had been at $5\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. in 1816, were reduced in 1817 to $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

only; a reduction, which, together with other circumstances, rendered the raising the supply of the year by exchequer bills so much more advantageous than resorting to a loan.

There were two further circumstances in the financial history of the year 1817, which prove the attention of ministers at once to a just economy in the national expenditure, and to the due relief of the industry of the laboring classes suffering under the temporary pressure of an adverse season. The first of these measures was the appropriation of a million and a half of money by government to commissioners for the employment of the poor. The second was the bill for the abolition of sinecures.

The former of these measures was rendered necessary by the peculiar difficulty under which the year 1817 was commenced. This year opened with a considerable deficiency, not less indeed than ten per cent. on the whole amount of the public revenue; with a harvest less than an average by at least one-third, and with a most material reduction in our general commerce, trade, and industry. This reduction indeed necessarily followed the cessation of the large war expenditure amongst ourselves, and the resumption

by the continental nations of those several branches of navigation, commerce, and manufacture, which, though originally belonging to themselves, had, during the war and the hostile occupation of their soil, been transferred to Great Britain. Suffice it to say of this temporary aid, that it was as cheerfully given as it was imperiously required.

The second circumstance, the abolition of sinecures, was a concession to popular opinion, and was chiefly of public value, inasmuch as it afforded the occasion of producing before the public the real state of a question upon which they had been much deluded. According to the popular writers of the day, and even to some of the members of the House of Commons, who hastily and unwarrantably adopted the assertions of such authorities, much of the public distress was imputable to the lavish expenditure of government and ministers. In the discussion of the bill for the abolition of sinecures, it appeared that the whole amount of them did not exceed one hundred thousand pounds; that there were not more than three of them of any considerable annual income; that they were part of the funds of the crown for rewarding civil

services; and that, with scarcely any exception, they had been given to the families of high public officers in lieu of pensions to which their services had entitled them. Under such circumstances the country could gain little by the abolition of sinecures, which were effectually pensions with the name of offices. But, under the current delusion of the day, the bill was demanded by the popular voice, and was cheerfully conceded by his Majesty's ministers. They deemed it, however, and they doubtless still deem it, a duty of candor not to catch at a praise to which they had no just claim: they gave the bill because the public demanded it; but they stated that its value was nothing, and upon this score to nothing do they lay claim.

The year 1818 opened under a more favorable aspect than the preceding year, and the ministers found themselves in a condition of prosecuting their resolute purpose of reducing the national expenditure. The supply of the year was accordingly taken upon a reduced scale, through all the four branches—the army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous.

For the year 1817 the supply for the army had been nine millions and eighty thousand pounds; for 1818 it was eight millions nine

hundred thousand pounds. In the navy, the supply for 1817 was seven millions five hundred and ninety-six thousand pounds, which included a sum for the reduction of the navy debt. In 1818 it was six millions four hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds, being a saving of nearly one million in the navy. The ordnance for 1817 was one million two hundred and seventy thousand pounds; for 1818 it was one million two hundred and forty-five thousand pounds. The miscellaneous for 1817 was one million seven hundred and ninety-five thousand pounds; for 1818 it was one million seven hundred and twenty thousand pounds. For the year 1817, the total of the supply for these four branches of the expenditure had been a small excess above twenty millions. For the year 1818, the same supply was a small excess above eighteen millions, a saving of nearly two millions upon the former year.

In the financial history of this year, it is an act of justice to the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to omit the effective expedient by which he provided the Ways and Means. Including the interest upon exchequer-bills, and the Sinking Fund upon their amount, the total supply for the year was about twenty-one millions. Of this amount about seven

millions and a quarter were, of course, raised in the usual way, by the annual unappropriated taxes, the lottery, old stores, and arrears of war duties. Of the remaining fourteen millions, three millions were procured by the sale and transfer of stock from funds of a lower to a higher denomination of interest; the difference of value of the two stocks, about eleven per cent. being paid to government for the exchange. This exchange was made from stock of three per cent. to stock of three and a half. The principle of this measure was to raise so much of the required sums for the service of the year without increasing the nominal capital of the debt; that is to say, by creating a new three and a half per cent. stock out of the three per cent. stock; or, in other words, extinguishing so much of the three per cent. by converting it into three and a half per cent. and taking the difference from the purchaser for the public service of the year. The remaining eleven millions were raised in the usual way by the issue of exchequer-bills; but that the money-market might not be disadvantageously affected by such an issue, this measure was accompanied by withdrawing and funding twenty-seven millions of debt and exchequer-bills previously floating. This reduction of the floating

debt was as seasonable this year as the increase of it had been useful in the preceding. In 1817 the Chancellor of the Exchequer had raised the money for the service of the year by Exchequer-bills rather than by a loan, because there was a saving in this process, and because the state of the unfunded debt in the market admitted the operation. The event justified the prudence of this preference. Stocks having risen under its effect from seventy-five to eighty, being a saving to government of five per cent., or nearly two millions upon the capital of the loan. But whilst this constituted a good reason for having increased the unfunded debt, in 1817, the actual quantity of it in the market, in 1818, formed a reason equally strong for its reduction at that period. Both measures, therefore, had been equally seasonable, according to the different circumstances of the money-market in the two years.

It was another feature in the Finance of this year, that though eighteen millions had been added to the unfunded debt, fifty millions had been paid off the national debt in the course of three years; so that the country had in fact paid off nearly three times as much as it had added, and the beneficial operation of the Sinking Fund was in full activity. In a word,

the summary of the financial history for the year 1818 is, that, under the head of the current supply of the year, two millions were reduced from the amount of the former year; that, under the Ways and Means, three millions were raised without adding to the nominal amount of the national debt, and that about sixteen millions were paid off. The funds were raised from seventy-five to eighty, and the public credit of government so elevated in the money-market, as to open no distant prospect of the reduction of the four and five per cent. stock by an advantageous bargain with the capitalists. The number of the army was equally reduced with the amount of the supply. In 1817 the amount of men for Great Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies, was eighty-one thousand men. The number of men for the same service in 1818 was seventy-eight thousand men. This reduction was made on the Irish establishment only. In 1816 the amount for Ireland had been twenty-five thousand; in 1817 this had been reduced to twenty-two thousand; and in 1818 to twenty thousand. With such good faith to the country did ministers continue to adhere to their pledge in reduction and economy.

In the following year, 1819, the finances of the country, under this steady and uniform

system of retrenchment, continued progressively to improve. The effects of the war, and of the sudden transition to a state of peace, were gradually passing away; and our navigation, trade, and commerce, were now adapting themselves to their new channels. It is true that our agricultural interests were not apparently restored to a firm and solid basis. Our agriculturists, like our manufacturers, had so extended the basis of their supply during the war, as to raise a produce considerably exceeding the general and ordinary demand, and by such an excess they necessarily reduced the price of corn.

In the speech by which the Prince Regent opened the session of parliament of the year 1819, his Royal Highness, as respected the financial state of that year, congratulated the country upon three new circumstances in the public condition—the withdrawing the army from France; the great reduction of the naval and military establishment; and the progressive improvement of the revenue in all its sources. By the evacuation of France, though the army in that country was chiefly supported by the French government, the British empire was necessarily relieved of much extraordinary expenditure, which could not be carried to the

account of the pay and sustenance of the troops. In January, 1818, the revenue had been fifty-one millions and a half. In January, 1819, the same revenue had increased to fifty-four millions, an augmentation of three millions and a half upon the face of the accounts. But as the fifty-one millions of 1818 were in fact only raised to that amount by including an extraneous sum of four millions belonging to the arrears of war-duties, property-tax, &c. the proper income of 1818 did not exceed forty-eight millions; and of course the real increase in 1819 was upwards of five millions, an increase exceeding ten per cent. upon the whole amount of the revenue and permanent taxes. In 1818 the committee of finance had estimated the whole revenue of the country at fifty-one millions and a half, and the expenditure at fifty millions, leaving a balance of one million and a half towards the expenses of the year. But the revenue of 1819 exceeded this estimate by three millions and a half. The condition of the revenue, in 1819, was therefore such as to give an increase of three millions and a half towards the expenses of the year.

In taking the estimates for the supply of this year, his Majesty's ministers did not so presume upon this improved state of the public

revenue, as to augment the establishments for the public service; but, on the contrary, persevered in their uniform efforts still further to diminish the expenditure. Throughout the four ordinary branches of the annual expenditure they took the supply at a diminished estimate. It is true, indeed, that the successive reductions, during the three former years, had almost exhausted the possibility of further economy, and that little remained to do where so much had already been done. But, under the actual burthen of the national debt, the saving of even half a million in the whole expenditure was an important alleviation. Accordingly they directed their efforts to a further economy, and they accomplished this reduction. In the year 1818 the supply taken for the army was eight millions nine hundred and seventy thousand. In the year 1819, the supply for the same head was eight millions nine hundred thousand. For the year 1818 the supply for the navy was six millions four hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds. For the year 1819 the supply for the same service was six millions four hundred and thirty-six thousand. In 1818 the vote for the ordnance was one million two hundred and forty-five thousand pounds. In 1819 this estimate was diminished to one million one hundred and ninety-

one thousand pounds. In 1818, the miscellaneous was taken at one million seven hundred and twenty thousand pounds. In 1819, the supply for this branch, was one million nine hundred and fifty thousand. The aggregate saving on the whole of the estimates, on the account for the year, was about half a million. The total amount of the supply for these four services for 1819 was thus a small excess above eighteen millions four hundred thousand, but including the interest of exchequer bills for the service of the year, and thus removed from the market, the total supply was twenty millions four hundred thousand pounds.

There were, moreover, two special demands belonging to the year 1819; the one for five millions in repayment to the Bank of five of the ten millions owing to that establishment; the other, also, for five millions in discharge of exchequer bills. The whole sum to be raised for the ordinary and extraordinary service of the year was a small excess above thirty millions. The Ways and Means of the year, for raising this large amount, and for establishing public credit upon a solid basis, were distinguished by two new measures; the one, a compliance with the recommendation of the Finance Committee in imposing new taxes to the amount of three millions, in aid of a surplus from the

Consolidated Fund; the other, a loan of twelve millions from the Sinking Fund for the service of the year. The first of these measures necessarily paved the way for the adoption of the other, and, together with the actual amount of the Sinking Fund, (now nearly fourteen millions) added to the benefit of deriving some present relief from its immense accumulation, induced the ministers to yield to the strong representation of public opinion, and to raise a portion of the service of the year by the appropriation of some of this excess. The Finance Committee had passed a resolution, that the national finances of the country would not be established upon a basis sufficiently solid and permanent, until the income of the year should exceed the expenditure by at least five millions. In order to raise the income of the country so as to produce this surplus, the same committee had recommended that three millions of new taxes should be imposed. Such was the origin of the new taxes. The total supply for the year 1819, was therefore raised by the produce of the unappropriated annual taxes, by the three millions of new taxes, by twelve millions taken from the Sinking Fund, and the remainder by loan and exchequer-bills.

It is assuredly not too much to say, that

in the imposition of four out of five of these new taxes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made such a selection of the subject-matter upon which they were imposed, that the burthen of them is in practice so insensibly felt, that not one person out of five hundred can enumerate the subjects taxed. Indeed, so considerately, and with such just selection, were these new taxes imposed, that, up to the present period, they are paid by the consumer, and almost by the dealer, without the consciousness of any increase.

A third measure in the history of the Finance of 1819, and which has only not received its due praise, because, like many other measures of his Majesty's ministers, the process of it has been less ostentatious than the effect visible, was in the transfer of several articles, under the heads of coffee, tea, cocoa, pepper, and tobacco, from the customs to the excise; by the effect of which almost all the expense of the officers hitherto employed in one department of the custom-house was saved, and a very considerable reduction thus made in the general expense of collection. It would far exceed the possible extent of this summary, to enumerate the many other examples of this mode of economy in which, so much, and with so little preter.

sion, has been saved to the nation. With his Majesty's ministers, economy has been a business, and reduction a duty; and they have felt it more to their honor to act than to talk. If they could reconcile it to their personal feelings to produce a claim to the public gratitude, with as much frequency and pertinacity, as their opponents can deem it consistent with candor to repeat day after day the same exploded charges; if in acts of duty, as in acts of grace, this *commemoratio beneficiorum* was not *quasi exprobatio in ingratam patriam*; if it were as much a matter of course to repeat one's own deserts, as it appears to be to reiterate popular calumnies, it would be easy for ministers or their advocates to produce a long account of services of this nature, and to vindicate their claim to an uniform course of economy in every branch of the public service.

A fourth and prominent feature in the finances of the year 1819, was the bill, now popularly denominated Mr. Peel's bill; in which his Majesty's ministers first acted upon their resolute purpose to restore the currency to its original state; and, in the resumption of cash payments, to re-establish the ancient security against an excessive issue of paper-money. It is but justice to recal to public recollection, that through all the difficulties of the latter

period of the war, they never lost sight of this purpose. In distinction from the merely speculative opinions of their political adversaries, they never regarded the question of cash and paper to be a mere question of saving, as respected the price of bullion and coin. On the contrary, in concurrence with all practical men of the present day, they considered the main and principal value of cash payments to be in the single circumstance, that they contained in themselves a control and security against a too extensive issue of paper, and confined such issues to the real exigencies of trade and business. It is unnecessary to suggest the difficulties with which ministers had to contend in accomplishing this great national object of cash payments; for national it may truly be called, inasmuch as if ministers had consulted their own personal convenience, and the facility of their administration, they would either not have attempted this measure at all, or have postponed it to a remoter period. It was not one of those measures into which they were pushed, either by party contest, or popular clamor. Their political adversaries were divided amongst themselves even as to the expediency of the object; and a very large portion of them advised and recommended a measure, which, though in form apparently the same, would in

its practical operation, and by the difficulties in the way of procuring circulating cash, have perpetuated the paper system. But with the simplicity, and it is not too much to add, with the sincerity and directness, which have always distinguished the acts of the present government, ministers resolved upon a real and not a *nominal* execution of what they deemed a public service. Accordingly, the enactments of Mr. Peel's bill were directed at once to the resumption of cash-payments, and they have effected their purpose. When time shall have cleared away the political prejudices of the day, and public measures shall be regarded according to their real character, it will become the long praise of his Majesty's ministers, that they held this steady confidence in the resources of the country and in the firmness of the public mind; for as it has been justly observed by one of the most intelligent of the political adversaries of administration, England is the only country who has ever attempted to retrace her steps from paper to bullion payments. As to the personal difficulties with which ministers had to contend in their execution of this measure, they had, in the first instance, to repay the Bank the large debt due to that e stablishment. They had doubtless, likewise to forego some portion of the ordinary aid of that company, in raising

the supplies for the two following years. In a word, they had to make sacrifices from their own interests, and to demand sacrifices from a public body, which, in its due relations, had always concurred with the government in assisting the public service. Without admitting, in any thing like their full extent, the assertions of popular writers and speakers, of the certain effects of this resumption of cash-payments upon trade, commerce, and industry, they foresaw that it must be attended with some degree of public suffering, and they did not affect to conceal it in the discussion which preceded the bill. But the merit is theirs of not having given too much weight to opinions merely speculative. It is certain, that upon the commencement of this bill in operation, the prices of agricultural produce and of general merchandize were much depressed; but it is now equally certain, that this depression of prices was rather a concurrent incident than a consequent effect. In agriculture, as in manufactures, prices had become depressed, because the supply existed in a temporary excess beyond the demand. In manufactures, the capital and machinery, enlarged and accumulated during the war, had not yet withdrawn itself within the limits belonging to

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general commerce during a peace. In agriculture, successive abundant seasons in England and Ireland, added to the same cause which operated in manufactures, (an enlarged basis of cultivation and supply, and the absence and diminution of the demand and waste of war) produced the same effects; and corn became cheap, not because money was dear, but because corn was plentiful. If the price of money have risen, it has at least risen in no proportion to the depression of prices in corn and manufactures. But, to say the truth, this is the common error oft hat portion of the opponents of government who may be termed the economists. In the absence of all practical experience, they assign infinitely too much to their abstract and theoretical principles. They carry to the account of their theories, what, to all but themselves, are but the manifest effects of the most common causes.

As respects the following year 1820, and the further attempts of the ministers to continue their reductions, the same general observations apply as to the preceding year; that so much had already been done, as almost to exhaust the fund of further economy and retrenchment. In every branch of the public service, the establishments (as then appeared

not only to his Majesty's ministers, but to that portion of country gentlemen usually voting with the Opposition) had been cut down to the lowest possible degree consistent with their efficiency. In Ireland, as we have before observed, the successive reduction of three years had diminished the military establishment from twenty-five thousand to twenty thousand men. In the Colonies, during the same period, a gradual reduction had been made from forty-six thousand men to thirty-two. In Great Britain, or the home-service, the original peace establishment had been taken at twenty-six thousand men; and, though several attempts had been made to reduce it, such diminution had been found inconsistent with the due maintenance of the public peace, and with the due relief of our foreign garrisons, upon the new system of regiments instead of drafting. The year 1820 afforded a strong illustration of the necessity of this force for the home service. By the increased circulation of libellous papers, and by a new form of libelling almost peculiar to the present times—that of the cheap publications—the minds of the lower classes had become so corrupted and inflamed, as not only to excite an apprehension for the security of person and property in our manufacturing

towns and counties, but to induce the country magistracy, throughout the kingdom in general, to apply to ministers for a further military protection. It does not fall within the purpose of our present observations to enter into the detail of those applications. Suffice it to say, that there was almost a general call upon ministers to increase the military establishment for the home service.—Under these circumstances, it became necessary, in the year 1820, to make a small addition for the service of Great Britain.—The opponents of his Majesty's ministers would have exhibited more candor if they had less laboriously concealed this necessity from the public eye; if they had thrown this augmentation upon the public call, instead of objecting to it as an act proceeding from the ministers themselves. But have not his Majesty's ministers still some justice to complain, that this objection has not unfrequently proceeded from the mouths of those, who have themselves most strongly invoked this increase of military force in their own respective counties?—A loose rein must undoubtedly be given to political conflict—But surely there are such things as gentlemanly honor and fair dealing.

Under these circumstances, it is no small praise belonging to the supplies for the year

1820, that in those new perils of the public peace, and in this unforeseen necessity of augmenting the home-military establishment, the total of the annual supplies of 1820 exceeded by so small an amount the supplies for 1819. This excess was of course in the army and the miscellaneous. In 1819 the supply for the army had been eight millions nine hundred thousand. In 1820 it was nine millions four hundred thousand. In 1819 the supply for the navy had been six millions four hundred thousand. In 1820 it was six millions five hundred thousand. In 1819 the ordnance had been one million a hundred and ninety thousand. In 1820 it was nearly the same. In 1819 the miscellaneous, upon making up the account for the year, was a small excess beyond two millions. In 1820 it was two millions five hundred thousand. The total amount of the ordinary annual service, for the year 1819, had been twenty millions four hundred thousand, and a small fraction. For the year 1820 it was twenty millions seven hundred thousand, and a small fraction. The increase of 1820 was, therefore, little more than a quarter of a million. The total supply of the year, including a sum required for a further reduction of the unfunded debt, was twenty-nine millions seven hundred thousand.

As regarded the Ways and Means, the supply was raised in the usual manner—by the annual taxes, by exchequer-bills, and by taking twelve millions from the Sinking Fund. If the amount of the Sinking Fund, which in 1819 did not exceed fourteen millions, rendered this measure politic in the preceding year, when it was first adopted, still more advisable had it become under the circumstances of that fund in 1820, when its amount was seventeen millions, and when, upon a comparison of the money taken and left, there was a surplus of five millions in the hands of the commissioners.

One of the main features in the financial history of this year was the settlement of the Civil List upon the accession of his present Majesty. It was settled upon the plan of 1816. The unanimous assent and approbation of all parties render it unnecessary to go into detail on this subject.

In the year 1821, ministers persevered, so far as the new circumstances of the country would allow, in their efforts to reduce the national burthens. In the preceding year, they had been much embarrassed and counteracted in these attempts, by the interruption of the tranquillity of the kingdom from the practices of incendiary writers and speakers. These prac-

tices had rendered the security of the public peace paramount even to the great objects of national economy. It was in vain to reduce the expenditure unless we first defended the common safety. In the great conflict with the common enemy abroad, we had come out glorious and unimpaired. It was a more perilous contest with that large portion of our own community, who were deluded by the seditious writers and orators of the day. By the firmness of parliament, and, we presume, it may be added, by the timely prudence of ministers, this conflict has now successfully concluded, and with as small a substraction from the securities of our constitutional liberties, as was consistent with the magnitude of the danger. If it were necessary to confirm this observation by any fact or argument, it would be amply sufficient to recal to public recollection, that the Six Acts, as they were termed, passed for this purpose, were carried through the House with the almost unanimous consent of the country gentlemen. The *fons et origo mali*, the intolerable licentiousness of the press, and more particularly in its new form of cheap publications, was indeed so obviously swelling into a torrent, menacing every thing in its way, and, by sap or assault, attacking every fence of the

social fabric, that it had become a common cause to apply the vigor of the law in defence of the public safety.

Under the operation of these acts the year 1821 opened with a better prospect for his Majesty's ministers, as regarded even the success of their future economical efforts: they accordingly resumed these efforts, and immediately acted upon them. In the speech by which his Majesty opened the sessions of parliament for the year, a pledge was given for these further reductions. Accordingly, both the estimates, and afterwards the supplies, were taken at a reduced rate, as compared with the service of the previous year.

In 1820, the total supply actually taken, when making up the accounts of the year, appeared to be thirty millions. In 1821 the total supply did not exceed twenty millions, a reduction of demand upon the resources of the country of ten millions. In 1820 the total for the four ordinary divisions of the annual expenditure, the Army, Navy, Ordnance, and Miscellaneous, had exceeded nineteen millions six hundred thousand. In 1821 the total for the same service was eighteen millions, a reduction of nearly two millions in the ordinary annual expenditure. This saving had been distributed through all the heads of

service. For 1820 the supply for the army had been nine millilons four hundred thousand and a fraction. For 1821 the supply taken was eight millions seven hundred thousand. In 1820 the supply for the navy was six millions five hundred thousand and a fraction. For 1821 the supply for the same service was six millions one hundred thousand and a fraction. For 1820 the supply for the ordnance had been nearly one million two hundred thousand. For 1821 the same supply was one million one hundred and ninety-five thousand. For 1820 the miscellaneous was two millions four hundred thousand and a fraction. For 1821 the same service was taken at one million nine hundred thousand, a reduction, as before stated, on the ordinary annual expenditure, of nearly two millions; and on the total expenditure of the two years compared, of ten millions. As respected the Ways and Means for raising this supply, six millions of it were raised from the usual ready money sources of government, the new dutiets, lotery, &c. and the remainder by a loan of thirteen millions from the Sinking Fund.

In the brief examination of this budget, consistent with this summary review of our finances, it affords two circumstances chiefly worthy of observation; the first, the reduc-

tion of nearly two millions from the supply taken for the preceding year; and the second, such a prosperous condition of public credit, and such a progressive amelioration in the state of the industrious part of the community, as enabled the Saving Banks of the country to pay one million yearly into the public funds.

Such, therefore, is the state of the question as respects the successive reductions effected by his Majesty's ministers. Upon a retrospect of what has been above stated, and for the sake of affording a simple and collective view of these reductions, they may be briefly enumerated as follows:—

First.—The total of the ordinary and extraordinary annual supply for 1816 (exclusive of the interest of the national debt and the charges on the Consolidated Fund) was twenty-seven millions. The total of the ordinary and extraordinary supply for 1817 was twenty-two millions. The total of the same supply for the year 1818 was twenty millions nine hundred thousand. The total of the same supply for the year 1819 was twenty millions four hundred thousand. The total of the same for 1820 was twenty millions seven hundred thousand. For 1821 the same was twenty millions.

Second.—The total of the ordinary expenditure (for army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous) for 1816 was twenty-four millions eight hundred and eighty-seven thousand pounds. The total for 1817 was twenty millions. The total for 1818 was a small excess above eighteen millions. The total for 1819 was nearly the same sum. The total for 1820 (including the estimated expense of the coronation) was a small excess above nineteen millions. The total for 1821 was eighteen millions. Being a reduction, in 1817, of five millions; in 1818, of two millions; in 1819, of the same; and a small addition having been made in 1820, under the two new circumstances of the expected coronation and the interruption of the public tranquillity by the practices of incendiary writers and speakers: this charge was thrown off in the following year, 1821, and a return effected to the reduced standard of 1818 and 1819.

Third.—This reduction was carried through every head of the ordinary annual supply. The supply for the army, for 1816, was, in round numbers, eleven millions. For 1817 the supply for the same service was nine millions four hundred thousand. For 1818 eight millions nine hundred thousand. For 1819 eight millions nine hundred thousand. For 1820 (under the new circumstance of an in-

terruption in the public tranquillity by the causes which have been already stated) nine millions four hundred thousand. For 1821 eight millions seven hundred and fifty thousand—a return again to the reduced estimates of 1818 and 1819.

Fourth.—The same reduction was made in the naval supply. For 1816 the naval supply was ten millions. For 1817 the navy (including some extraordinaries upon making up the account of the year) cost seven millions. For 1818 six millions and a half. For 1819 the naval supply was six millions four hundred thousand. For 1820 six millions five hundred thousand and a fraction. For 1821 six millions one hundred thousand and a fraction.

Fifth.—The same successive reduction was effected in the Ordnance. For 1816 the ordnance service was sixteen hundred thousand. For 1817 twelve hundred and seventy thousand. For 1818 twelve hundred and forty thousand. For 1819 eleven hundred and ninety thousand. For 1820 twelve hundred thousand. For 1821 eleven hundred and ninety thousand; being a return to the reduced estimates of the year 1819; the small addition in the preceding year being occasioned by the disturbed state of the country, by the same cause as the increase of the army, namely,

the agitated condition of certain districts, and the employment of marines to perform garrison duty.

Sixth.—In the miscellaneous, allowing for the less proportion in which this head of service is affected by the difference of peace and war, a system of retrenchment is equally visible. For 816 the miscellaneous was two millions and a half. For 1817 the same service was seventeen hundred thousand. For 1818 the same. For 1819 one million nine hundred thousand pounds. For 1820 (under the two new circumstances of the coronation and the derangement of the public peace) it was two millions four hundred thousand. In 1821 the supply was one million nine hundred thousand, being a return to the reduced estimate of the year 1819.

Seventh.—The same successive reduction was made in the number of men taken for the military and naval establishments through the several years. In the course of 1815 and 1816 three hundred thousand men were discharged from the army and navy. In 1810 the peace establishment for the Home-service, Ireland, and the Colonies, was fixed at ninety-nine thousand men. In 1817 this was reduced to ninety-two thousand. In 1818 it was reduced to eighty-one thousand. In

1819 it was again reduced to seventy-eight thousand.

Eighth.—And during these reductions more than sixteen millions of annual taxes were removed, and ten millions of the Bank debt paid.

Ninth.—And by these uniform efforts for reduction on the one part, and for the support of public credit on the other, the national currency was re-established, and cash-payments finally restored in the present year.

Nor have his Majesty's ministers stopped here, but, since the close of the last session, have still, with the same earnestness and sincerity, been occupied in such further reductions as the exigencies of the public service would admit. In a very few weeks after these observations shall meet the public eye, a detailed statement will, doubtless, be made in parliament, by which it will appear, that a further reduction of upwards of £1,500,000 has been effected within the short interval between the close of the last session and the commencement of the ensuing. It is surely not too much to say, that this amount of reduction exceeds what could have been anticipated by the warmest friends of economy. It is another question, perhaps, whether in the degree of these retrenchments ministers have not pared away a little too near the

quick, and whether some of them have not already been found to put into peril, and assuredly to augment the difficulty of a due and prompt administration of the public service. It is another question, whether some services might not have been more efficiently performed with larger means. It is another question whether, in the prudence of government, as in the prudence of individual life, present cheapness is always the best economy; and whether energy and promptitude, in the application of public force to sudden tumults, be not well purchased by the difference of cost between a force of ready, and a force of tardy, application. All these points belong to a different view of the subject.

If it be conceded, as indeed it can no longer be denied,—that these several reductions have been made in the degree and manner above stated; but, if it be demanded, why were not these reductions made before? Have they not rather been extorted than given? Do not the public owe them rather to the vigilance of Opposition than to the free grace of his Majesty's ministers?—It may be very shortly answered, that they have been carried into effect at the first possible moment; and that the opponents of his Majesty's ministers have in no instance led the way to any practi-

cable reductions in the establishments of the country. They have indeed fired at random into the midst of all of the public establishments; and, under the necessary effect of an aim, comprehending generally the whole covey, though they may possibly have hit the same birds, they are but little entitled to the praise of any direct intention or distinct object. By proposing to reduce all, they have so far fallen into concurrence with his Majesty's government in reducing some. But let these gentlemen in turn answer his Majesty's ministers this question—What would now have been the state of the country, if their proposed retrenchments had been carried into effect?

Ministers have not only reduced all that was possible, but at the first possible moment. At the end of no former war was the framework of our army so large and complicate, composed of so many members, and those members so remote in position and service. At the end of no former war had the soldiers and officers of our army and navy such claims upon the consideration of the community. At the end of no former war were such establishments to be reduced, and so many soldiers and sailors to be cast upon the agriculture of the country. An adverse political spirit was still fermenting throughout the population of the conquered

colonies. The embers of civil discord were not extinct in France, and the principle of innovation was already at work in every part of Europe. The internal tranquillity of the country had been disturbed by factious artifices. Under all these circumstances, it was manifestly necessary to proceed cautiously and with measured steps in the reduction of our force. Some interval of time was further necessary to form a distinct view of what admitted of reduction in a force so widely dispersed. Even now it is only upon a view of the improved state of things, and under an expectation that the existing quiet of our manufacturing districts may continue undisturbed; that the country magistracy in particular, and the people in general, will concur with ministers in maintaining tranquillity; that ancient habits and feelings will return, and that manners will take the place of laws in closing the channels of the country against the contagion of the licentious press of the metropolis—it is only under these expectations, that even now his Majesty's ministers can justify themselves in the late reductions of our military force.

Our first proposition, under the head of the Finance Administration of his Majesty's Ministers, was, that, from the year 1816 up to the present period, they have successively effected

such reductions in the annual expenditure, as is consistent with the due efficiency of the public service. This being, as it is trusted sufficiently proved, the order of the subject-matter now proceeds to the second position, namely, *That the main sources of national revenue and public wealth are, in their actual state, entire and unimpaired, and most fully justify a confidence for the present, and a strong expectation for the future.* This is the question for present examination.

In considering the sources of the country, the most obvious order appears to be to take the funds of production. The heads of these funds are the Commerce, the Navigation, the Manufactures, the Internal Trade, and (so far as respects the interests of the revenue, and as affording proof that the general means of consuming are unimpaired) the National Consumption. A very brief and general view of our national sources in these their main channels will afford the most satisfactory answer to the proposition under consideration.

Under the head of Commerce, the first point is—the comparative state of imports through the successive years from 1817 downwards. Now as regards the bearing of the amount of imports upon the question of our national resources, these imports naturally distribute themselves

under the three classes—the first, the imports connected more immediately with manufactures and foreign trade than with the consumption of the country; and therein by their increase or decrease affording an unequivocal proof of the growth of that trade and manufacture of which they form the materials. The second, imports in part consumed, and in part affording materials of foreign trade. The third, the imports entirely consumed.

The principal imports of the first class are flax, hemp, raw and thrown silk, and cotton. It is not our purpose to exhaust the patience of our readers by exhibiting the columns of figures under these several heads. So far as respects the point in question, namely, the integrity of all the funds of produce, the result of this comparison may be shewn in a few sentences. In 1817, the official value of flax and hemp, the materials of our linen manufacture of all kinds, and therefore a more just criterion of the state of these manufactures than the quantity of the manufactured article, was in round figures £700,000. In 1821, the official value of the same articles was one million two hundred thousand pounds. In raw silk, (an article of the first consequence, inasmuch as it is the material of a manufacture now about

to become one of the staples of the kingdom, and to push aside its former rivals, the silks of Italy and Lyons) the state of our imports through the above successive years has been equally promising: Without going through the minute detail of figures, it will be sufficient to add, that, from 1816 to 1822, the amount of raw and thrown silk imported has increased from about half a million to nearly a million and a half; that is, to three times its former amount. This increase of importation is of so much the more consequence, inasmuch, as above said, it is the increase of a manufacture now rising amongst us from its former subordinate state, to the condition of one of our staples. In cotton, the comparative state of our imports is equally promising. Within the same period of years, our importation of cotton, now the leading manufacture of the kingdom, and destined doubtless to become the clothing of the world, has increased from three millions to five, and in the year now about closing, (1821), will exceed six millions. Thus, in these three main articles of our manufactures, our cotton, silk, and linen staples, the first has nearly doubled itself, within about five years; the second has trebled itself, and the last, in despite of the competition of the German manufacturers, and their peculiar facilities of supplying the con-

tinent by their internal navigation, has likewise nearly doubled in amount.

Of the imports in part consumed, and in part affording articles of foreign trade, the principal are, sugar, rum, tea, and tobacco. Under all these heads there has been an increase in the importation, except as compared with those years of extraordinary produce of the revenue, when the war expenditure was at such an unexampled height, and the spirit of speculation, bursting forth with the peace, carried the trade of the country so far above its ordinary level. From 1817 to the present time, our importation of sugar has increased from three millions and a half cwts. to four. The official value of the importation in 1821 was five millions and a half, a sum equal to the best year of the war. The importation of rum exhibits a still more flattering increase. From 1817 to 1821 the importation of rum has nearly doubled; in the former year the value being 348,000, and in the latter 618,000. In tea, our import has obtained a steady augmentation within the same period by nearly the amount of two millions of lbs. in quantity, and exceeds the average of the war consumption by nearly one million in official value. The import of tobacco has greatly increased from 1817 up to the present time. In

all these articles, therefore, having this mixed character of home-consumption and the materials of foreign trade, there has been this large increase within the last five years of the peace.

Of imports entirely consumed by ourselves, and consisting of an infinite number of small articles, the general result will be best exhibited by the gradual increase in the customs and excise upon these imports. Suffice it to observe, that, throughout all these articles, there has been an increase proportionate to their several amounts; which, though too small upon each article singly to justify a separate statement, ascends, upon the whole, to an increase of at least two millions upon almost any year of the war.

The principal exports connected with the sources of our national prosperity are our cotton, woollen, linen, and silk manufactures; our iron and steel work; our tin, pewter, and plated goods; glass, and refined sugar. To which may be added, our colonial exports of coffee, rum, sugar, indigo, and India piece goods.

Under all these heads, it will be seen that our funds of commerce and industry exist in the same vigor and integrity as during the war. From 1817 to 1821, the value of our cotton manufactures, exported, rose from sixteen millions to twenty-one millions. But in no

year of the war had the value of these exports exceeded eighteen millions. When the accounts shall be made up for the year now current, namely, to January 1822, the value of our cotton exports will be found to exceed twenty-three millions; such at least is the promise of the quarter now current. Under this head, therefore, which in value exceeds one half of the total amount of all our exports of British manufacture, the resources of the country are not only entire, but exceed, by nearly one-fourth, the average of the last three years of the war.

Our next manufacture is our woollen. The average value of this export during the war was between five and six millions annually. Under the effect of the foreign wool-tax, the value of the same export, in the year 1821, was reduced to four millions and three quarters. In the year now closing it will much exceed five millions. Our linen manufactures have risen, between 1817 and 1821, from one million and a half to two millions, being double the amount of the same exports during either of the three last years of the war, 1811, 1812, and 1813. Our exports in silk, though as to exports only an incipient manufacture, have gradually become in annual real value half a million, about

one-fourth the amount of our linen exports. Our exports of iron and steel, wrought and unwrought, in the year 1821, maintain their average produce during the war, and in January 1822 will exceed the export of any former year. From 1817 to the year 1821 our exports of refined sugar have increased from a million and a half to two millions, and have nearly doubled their amount in any year of the war. It would lead into a detail too minute to follow the comparative produce through the remaining articles in the long list of our exports. Suffice it to say, that they all exhibit the same aspect of unimpaired energy, and, from the promise of the current and commencing years, justify a strong expectation, that they are no longer vibrating between a high amount in one year and a diminishing rate in the following. Our tin, pewter, and plated goods, exceed, together, half a million in annual value, and exhibit an increase of nearly one half of their total amount above the war years of 1811, 1812, and 1813.

In colonial exports, sugar, rum, coffee, indigo, tobacco, and India piece goods, our exports in almost all cases equal their average amount during the three war years 1811, 1812, and 1813, and in many articles exceed double the average amount of a war year, as in rum and

indigo; the average war export of rum being in value half a million only, and in the year 1821 upwards of eleven hundred thousand pounds. The same of indigo; the average war export, in 1811, 1812, and 1813, being of the value of 400,000 only, whilst the exports of 1821 exceeded in value eight hundred thousand.

Nor has the average of our sugar exports declined from its amount during the war years above stated; a most important fact, when it is considered that, during the war, nearly all the sugar colonies in the world were our own. Another fact, and of most important bearing upon the question under consideration, should be retained in memory during the comparison of these two periods. Under the depreciation of all articles from the conclusion of the war to the present period, it is manifest that the same sums no longer represent the same quantities of goods, and, therefore, that the equality of value in the averages of the two periods is necessarily a proof of a great increase in the present time. Suffice it to add, in conclusion of this part of our subject, that our average exports of tobacco have nearly doubled their amount since the war; and that the average value of our India piece goods, exported, is gradually advancing from its amount of one million during the war, to a million

and a quarter. Such is the present condition of our national resources as regards the question of our foreign and colonial exports.

Under the head of navigation, the entirety of our resources may be very briefly exhibited in its four usual divisions—of vessels built, vessels registered, outward tonnage, and inward tonnage. Of vessels annually built, the average of the three last years of the war was seven hundred and sixty vessels. The average of the years since the peace has been one thousand vessels. Of the total tonnage of vessels registered, the average, during the war, was two millions and less than a half. The average of peace very nearly reaches two millions and three quarters. The average outward tonnage of vessels was, during the war, about one million and three quarters. The same average, during the last three years, has exceeded two millions. The average of inward tonnage was, during the war, about eighteen hundred thousand tons. The same average, during the last three years, has exceeded two millions and a quarter. Such is the brief exposition of the state of our national sources as regards our navigation.

Before quitting this part of our subject, it is an act of justice to his Majesty's ministers to remind the country, that under no former

administration has so much been conceded to the commercial interest of the empire. If ministers have not gone the full speculative length of those gentlemen, who in pamphlets and reviews out of parliament, and in speeches and essays within it (very commendable from their length and labor), have recommended the general adoption of all the theories of Smith and Turgot, they must not be denied, in the first instance, the praise of having listened to these speeches with a patience as commendable as the industry of the speakers; and in the next, of having supported, and personally attended, the appointment of the parliamentary committees for which they have asked. If these committees have, in most instances, had no other termination than in the publication of a long report, the cause is, doubtless, to be sought in the difficulty of the subject, and in the wide difference between theory and practice—between diagrams of navigation upon dry land, and practical courses rendered necessary by sea and winds. It is not requisite to inform his Majesty's ministers, that the first and best principles of commerce would be a perfect freedom of trade, and that in almost all cases legislators would act wisely in leaving it to find its own way. The same text-books were

open for them as for their political adversaries. It was as easy for them, upon a petition from Manchester or Birmingham, to give a laborious summary of the three volumes of the Wealth of Nations. It was as easy for them to refer all national principles to the language of the exchange and the bullion-market. But, having been educated in another school, they have learned that a nation has other interests besides those of money-making. They have learned that the first interest of the empire is in its national defence, and in the maintenance, in their full integrity, of those funds of our maritime greatness and revenue, under which we have attained our actual condition. They perceive, moreover, that an absolute liberty of trade can exist beneficially for us only by becoming a general system; for if one nation should abolish all its duties and restraints, whilst all other nations should retain them, the former will only sacrifice its revenue, and reduce all the sources of its national power, in order to strengthen and enrich the latter. Under these two controlling principles, his Majesty's ministers have indeed deemed it prudent to retain the navigation-laws of the kingdom, and to touch with great caution and delicacy a commercial system, under which the general commerce of Great

Britain exceeds the collective amount of the trade of all the nations in the world.

But will it be asserted for a moment that nothing has been done by ministers, and by the system upon which they act, when it is recollected, that to this system the country is indebted for the opening of the trade to India? Has nothing been done for the colonial trade, and for British commerce in general, by the several acts of the 52, 53, 54, and 57th of George the Third? Is it no relaxation from the ancient errors, as they are termed, of our colonial system, that, through the medium of free ports, nearly the whole exports of our colonies are open for the supply of the United States? Is it no departure from our ancient rigid monopoly, that American vessels, and the vessels of European powers, may now trade directly with India, and that by a very recent act, the British private trade to the East Indies may now seek a general market? Is it nothing, that of all the ancient monopolies by companies, the most impolitic, doubtless, of all monopolies, one only now exists, and that company so divested of its exclusive powers, as nearly to reduce it, as respects general commerce, to an open trade?

Will the political economists themselves refuse praise to his Majesty's ministers upon

their own principles, when it shall be brought to their recollection, that in a time of much difficulty they bought up the monopoly of the South Sea Company, and opened that large portion of the sea to general trade? Is it necessary to inform the patient and laborious lawyers of that party, how much litigation, and, in many instances, how many hardships to merchants were occasioned by these exclusive privileges of the South Sea Company, which were all abolished by the 55th of George the Third? And, to conclude this part of our subject upon the present occasion, has nothing been done by the abolition in many cases, and the reduction in still more, of the system of bounties, which, in the last century, pressed so uselessly on the produce of the customs? Assuredly, the merchants and traders of Great Britain will not refuse their tribute of gratitude to his Majesty's ministers, when they shall be reminded of those two most beneficial statutes, the 51st and the 54th of George the Third, by which the ancient fiscal rigor, respecting the seizure and forfeiture of ships for breaches of the revenue and navigation laws, has been so considerably relaxed, and a prompt and efficient remedy afforded to those hard circumstances so frequently occurring under them.

One further observation before this division closes. Looking to our navigation, trade, and commerce, under the two main heads of imports and exports, it has above been made manifest, that the average of the years of peace, reckoning from 1817 to 1821, far exceeds those of the three last years of the war, 1811, 1812, and 1813. In 1812 and 1813, both years of considerable trade, the value of our imports did not reach thirty millions; whilst the exports of those years, comprising British manufactures and foreign merchandize, did not exceed, in the most favorable of the three, forty-six millions. Now, in the year ending January 5th, 1821, the value of our imports exceeded thirty-six millions and a half, and our exports fell little short of fifty-two millions. In this account, the year ending January 5th, 1814, is omitted, as the documents have been destroyed by the fire at the Custom-house; and the years 1815 and 1816 ought not to be taken as standards. They were years of unparalleled speculation in imports and exports, arising from the sudden opening of the markets of the world, and therein formed an extraordinary state of circumstances which of course disqualify them from becoming examples of the ordinary progress of trade.

As such is the state of the question, as regards our general commerce, the internal trade of the country exhibits an aspect equally promising. Amongst the ingenious writers of the present day, there has been much discussion respecting the comparative value of our home and foreign trade. According to some of these writers we are in every respect sufficient for ourselves; and the industry, and even the wealth of the country, would be but little affected, if we withdrew as much as possible from commercial intercourse with foreigners. According to others, and those the most numerous, we exist only by our foreign trade; and our national prosperity is to be regarded as rising or declining, in the proportion in which our foreign trade increases or diminishes. As usually happens in questions of this kind, both sides are in the extreme. Considering not only the number of our population, but its habits and ability of consuming, it is perhaps not too much to assert, that the consumption of the British empire, of all articles, except only bread-corn and the necessaries of life, exceeds that of the whole continent of Europe. If this be true, and it is of easy proof, the supply of this consumption, upon the mere point of its magnitude, must necessari-

ly be of much greater importance than our foreign commerce. This consideration of the question is further confirmed by the comparative sums contributed to the revenue by our foreign and internal trade. Of the fifty-six millions composing our annual revenue, not one-fifth of the whole is paid by the customs, and of course more than four-fifths by the excise, and other duties on use, possession, and consumption. Of so much consequence is it to our national welfare that all our funds of trade and industry should remain entire.

The principal subject-matter of internal trade is necessarily in our four principal manufactures, cotton, wool, linen, and silk; in our iron, tin, and copper works; in our glass, leather, printed goods, salt, soap, and candles; to which, as regards consumption and revenue, may be added, sugar, tea, wine, malt, and British and foreign spirits. It is not our purpose to follow the annual produce of these several articles in minute detail; a very few words upon one or more of them collectively will shew, that the annual quantity of these articles which the country consumes, and the working up, or dealing in which, affords employment to seven parts out

of ten of our population, is higher than in any average year of the war, and that, since the peace, they have all either absolutely increased, or maintained a high average rate.

It has often been lamented by political writers, that more satisfactory registers are not kept of the produce of our cotton and woollen manufactures. From the defect of all official records upon this subject, the state of these manufactures can only be collected either from the local vouchers of one or two districts, or from general observation of what is passing before the eyes of all of us. Enough, however, appears upon both these grounds to justify the assertion, that our cotton and woollen manufactures are rapidly rising to a state of unexampled prosperity. The activity of the woollen manufactures in Yorkshire, during the last half year, has never been known to be greater. This appears from the accounts of the quantity of manufactured cloth, exhibited at the quarter-sessions for the West Riding. The increase of the import of the raw material may afford a just measure of the increased manufacture. It has been stated in a former part of these observations, that, from 1817 only to the present time, our import of cotton-wool has nearly doubled, having

risen in that time from three millions to five. It is the same with flax and hemp, the raw materials of our linen, the value of the import of raw flax having augmented from four hundred thousand to eight. It is the same with our silk manufactures, the importation of the raw material having risen, from 1817 to the present time, from six hundred thousand pounds in value to nearly one million and a half; and what is perhaps of more importance, having so prodigiously advanced as to outstrip the manufactures of Lyons and Italy. The improved style of dress of the great majority of the people is an unanswerable argument of the vast increase of our muslins and calicoes. If it be here objected, that against this augmentation of the supply, we must set-off the reduction in the price, it may be answered, that the increase of manufactures does not occasion a glut or mischievous excess, so long as the demand continues with the increase, and so long as the manufacture can be carried on with profit. But the present active employment of all hands shews that such is the actual state of our manufactures. Under such circumstances, the reduction of price is proof only of the abundance of the article, and of the skill and in-

dustry with which it is worked up. If it be admitted that the total amount of what is now manufactured does not exceed in pecuniary value the less quantity which we worked up during the war, the country still possesses the same total value, and gains in the increased comfort and abundance in which every individual in the country is supplied.

As regards our silk manufactures in particular, it is not too much to say, that the country in general is not sufficiently sensible of their value and importance, and of the astonishing growth to which they have attained during the short period of ten or twelve years. This is a manufacture in a great degree foreign to us, and entirely taken from our neighbours; and having attained to its present state in so short an interval, it is not too much to anticipate such a further improvement, and such a consequent reduction of price, as may greatly extend the consumption of this article, not only amongst ourselves, but amongst foreigners. But upon this trade the country is already in possession of the report by the Committee of the House of Lords. It was in the same manner that, from small beginnings, our cotton manufacture has excluded that of all nations of the world; and that the fine mus-

lins and cambrics of Manchester, Glasgow, and Paisley, have driven those of France and India nearly out of the market.

As respects our domestic consumption, our printed goods are next in consequence. Here we get to the undoubted authority of official documents, and of those which can least be suspected, the accounts of money received upon them at the Excise. Here we have indisputable proof of the vast increase of the manufacture. Within seven years only, from 1813 to 1821, the annual excise upon this manufacture has risen from less than a million to nearly a million and a half; the amount paid in 1813 being about nine hundred thousand pounds, whilst in 1820 it was nearly a million and a half. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that seven-tenths of this species of manufacture is consumed entirely at home, and is the clothing of a great majority of our female population; and that the large consumption of it is, therefore, at once a proof of the prosperity of the manufacture, and of the continued ability of the consumers.

If the depression of price have been one of the causes of this increased consumption, the continuance of the manufacture from year to year is still a proof that the article can be yet

made with profit; whilst, as above said, the cheapness, or, in other words, the abundance, is but so much added to the comfort and substance of the people. If national opulence, like individual, consists only in the abundant possession of whatever renders life easy and comfortable, surely it is no inconsiderable addition to our general wealth, that so large a proportion of our population is so well and so sufficiently clothed. Is it possible, indeed, to pay a weekly visit to our country churches, and yet refuse to recognize the vast superiority of our laboring poor, in the quality and cleanliness of their clothing, above those of the continental nations. In answer, indeed, to any complaints of declining manufactures, is it necessary to say more than to refer the reader to his own observation? But as public wealth consists in the abundance itself, and not in current prices—as a manufacture, like a mine, is to be considered the richest, which pours forth the most plentiful produce—and as the integrity of the funds of growth is of infinitely more consequence, than the incidental price of their supply in a pecuniary market, it is unnecessary to urge further proof, that, as respects our manufactures at least, the resources of the country are unimpaired; that

all the same funds continue, and that almost all yield, not the same, but an increased supply; that the cheapness of price enables more persons to buy, and all persons to use more plentifully; that the consumption of the manufacture thus passes into classes, from which higher prices had excluded it, and, whilst the manufacturer himself loses nothing, inasmuch as he gains the same profit upon a larger stock, the condition of every individual in the country is improved, by obtaining either what he had not before, or by having it in more abundance. If our manufacturers have not a continental monopoly, as during some years of the war, it can no longer be a question, whether they are not more than compensated by the increased demand at home. High prices and large profits do not necessarily constitute the prosperity of trade, and assuredly do not compose the prosperity of a nation. It is the interest of a paternal government, that the largest possible proportion of its whole population should be enabled to reach the comforts and decencies of life; and this can never happen in any extent but under large supplies and low prices. The poorest nation in the world, the Spanish empire, made the highest profits upon the amount of its trade, and with

no other national benefit, than that a few merchants and companies were enriched at the general expense. Of so little importance, in a national point of view, is the reduction of the profits of trade, or rather the depression of prices.

If it could be expected that the reader would go through these statements without weariness, it might be easy to carry the same comparison through the long details of our domestic consumption, and to exhibit the same advantage of increase through all those heads and articles which peculiarly belong to our internal trade and intercourse. In that portion of our stamp-duties which belongs to the degree and number of our domestic dealings and exchanges, and which is therefore a just measure of any increase or diminution; in assessed taxes upon windows and inhabited houses, any augmentation of which can only arise from the continuing employment of capital in building and improving; in the post-horse and stage-coach duties, which necessarily measure the degree of intercourse between town and town;—under all these heads the official reports of finance can only lead to the same conclusion, that the resources of the internal trade of the country are not only unimpaired, but are all existing in increased energy.

A very brief view of the quarters just terminated will confirm the above proposition, and conclude this division of our subject. The first quarter of this year ended, of course, April 5th. Now, for the sake of exhibiting a fair comparison of the two years, let us for a moment assume the two financial years, 1820 and 1821, to have terminated respectively on that day. The increase of the revenue of the latter year would then exhibit a sum of nearly two millions. The increase on the excise alone would appear to be two millions and a half, and this increase attaching on articles of general consumption; on candles, coffee, hops, malt, pepper, printed goods, salt, soap, British spirits, tea, tobacco, and snuff. But if this quarter were thus favorable, the October quarter now past exhibits an augmentation of revenue without parallel.—Under all the heads of the consolidated fund, the customs, excise, stamps, and assessed taxes, there was a large excess above the corresponding quarter of the preceding year. In the total war taxes there is an excess of £500,000, beyond the corresponding quarter of last year; and in the total revenue, the excess, as compared with the same quarter, is between 8 and 900,000 pounds. Under the excise, all the great articles of consumption have increased, and this augmentation

has pervaded almost every head of the consolidated excise duties. The total was astonishing. It exhibited an increase over the October quarter of 1818 of a sum above £700,000; over the like quarter of 1819 of above £1,800,000; and over the corresponding quarter of 1820 of £857,000. Nor is there any just cause of apprehension that this prosperity is merely transient. At the time these observations are writing, there is confident reason to expect that there will be a considerable rise in the customs, and, so far as the payments from week to week have been made from the collectors of excise, they justify the expectation that the total produce will be equal to the receipt of the corresponding period of the last year*. But it is surely not necessary to argue, that occasional vibrations between a higher and a lower degree, from causes so entirely incidental as insufficient harvests and unfavorable seasons, are not to be carried to the discredit of the general character of our financial resources. The question is, what is our general condition, and not what is our particular suffering under a cause manifestly temporary. As a nation, like an in-

* Since the publication of the first edition of this work, the quarter has closed with an increase of more than £400,000 above the corresponding quarter of last year.

dividual, consumes perhaps under the same general circumstances about the same quantity, one year with another, it would be sufficient for our present purpose to shew that our general consumption has not declined.

Such is the general condition of the resources of the country, as respects the four great members which compose the fund of public wealth, our Commerce, Navigation, Manufactures, and Internal Trade. An objection may here probably be made, whether a fifth and most important member, our agriculture, does not remain behind, and whether the condition of that element of national strength be equally prosperous with those above mentioned. To this it might be answered, in the first instance, that we should carry in our minds a distinction before taken between the integrity of the fund of production itself, and the pecuniary price of its produce in the market. Every fund of production, whether a mine, a meadow, a tree, the soil of the earth, or a manufacture, is in a more or less prosperous state, and is more or less rich at one period than another, according as its actual produce has increased or diminished — according as it produces more or less of its natural fruit and subject of growth. But if this principle be applied to our agriculture, will it be contended,

that the productive powers of the soil are impaired, and that the proportion in natural produce of what is sown and what is reaped has become diminished? It is perfectly true, that, from a multitude of causes, some of them obvious and distinct, and others more remote and complicate, many of them still in operation, and others which have certainly exhausted their effect—our landlords and farmers have suffered much from the depression of the markets; and that the price of land in rent, and the price of its produce in the market, have rapidly fallen from their rate during the war. The causes of this depression have been examined at length by a parliamentary committee, and the conclusion to which the report conducts the reader agrees with the inference previously deduced by every one acquainted with the principles of political economy. As the committee was honored by the attendance of several of those gentlemen, who in the present day particularly profess to advocate those principles, and who indeed chiefly censure his Majesty's ministers for not adopting their sentiments to the full extent in which they themselves advocate them, we would wish to put it to their candor, whether, according to every just maxim of political economy, the present state of the corn-market can be any

thing but temporary; and whether it be in the nature of things, that the general price of the materials of human sustenance can fall short of the cost of producing them. It is totally impossible that the present state of the markets can continue, or that agriculture, like manufactures, should not accommodate itself to a new state of things, and therein resume a condition, under which it may be conducted with due profits to all concerned. One of the heaviest burthens upon agriculture, the poor-rates, is diminishing in every part of the kingdom; in many parts a half, and in all a fourth. The continuance of peace, and the proceeding improvement of our finances, added to the zeal and sincerity with which ministers are making retrenchments, will gradually relieve the landlord and farmer, whilst the advancing state of manufactures will both increase the demand for agricultural produce, and assist in the further reduction of the poor-rates. If the rent of land, aud the price of its produce, have diminished with the cessation of the war, so likewise have the price and stock of manufacturers and merchants. It is notorious, that the accumulated stocks of our merchants and manufacturers have diminished at least thirty per cent.; and that a capitalist, who, ten years since, was worth twenty thou-

sand pounds, in the value of his stock on hand, is now not worth fourteen; or to adopt the popular term, has suffered the extinction of a third part of his fortune. These are the incidents of the two periods of war and peace, and are common to all classes, as well as to the landlord and farmer. The main and sole question is, whether the fund of growth and profit be safe and unimpared? Is there the same proportion between the seed and the harvest? Must the article continue in demand, or is the demand gone altogether? If it must be had, it must be paid for. To say all in a word, and to conclude this part of our subject, it is totally impossible that the ordinary and general price of food should not command the price of the land which raises it, of the laborer who sows and reaps it, and of the farmer who affords the capital and current expense of its cultivation from day to day. For a single year, or even for three successive years, a large surplus, beyond the demand of consumption, will not only be so much not wanted in itself, and, therefore, in itself of little price in the market, but will necessarily affect the price of the whole quantity. But when waste, or what always accompanies the low price of food, a more plentiful use, shall have consumed the surplus quantity; or when the quantity grown

shall have adapted itself to the supply, if the quantity actually grown be too much, all these incidental irregularities will pass away, and farmers and landlords will obtain the prices to which they are entitled.

As regards the general state of our debt and the means of redeeming it, it will appear by the accounts of the year now closing, that ministers will have proceeded with all practicable expedition to accomplish the recommendation of the Finance Committee of 1819. By the effect of a most zealous retrenchment, and by the proceeding improvement of our national resources, they would have attained in 1822 a surplus of five millions, to be employed as a permanent sinking fund upon the national debt, if the agricultural horse tax of half a million had not been repealed. If Mr. Pitt, in the year 1786, regarded a sinking fund of one million to be adequate to the redemption of a debt of two hundred and forty millions, it is manifest that a sinking fund of five millions would operate with nearly a twofold proportion upon a debt of eight hundred millions. It would have the air of a paradox to assert, that a speedier redemption of the debt would not be desirable. But it may assuredly be stated, that in the actual condition of the country a larger sinking fund can in no degree be afforded. The immediate conclusion of a long war is not the most

favorable period for the redemption of a national debt. If, together with the success of the ministers in creating this sinking fund, it be borne in mind, that they have within the same period paid a debt to the Bank of ten millions, and have not only themselves foregone any facility from a paper-currency in administering the powers of government, but have urged and enabled the Bank to resume cash-payments, it will be admitted, that, under the difficulties of the times, and the conclusion of so long a war, they have accomplished as much as could reasonably be expected. It may now be confidently asserted, that the system of loans and new taxes has reached its termination; that we are now living upon our income, and are in a condition of redeeming yearly some part of a mortgage which undoubtedly presses heavily upon the industry of the people. Under the system of loans we should every year have borrowed upon less favorable terms; and what is equally worthy of consideration, we should have anticipated in peace the resources of war. We should have gone to any new war under a most extreme difficulty; or, like France, under the administration of Fleury, we should have lost our due consideration in Europe, by seeking peace at more than its due value. By the application of the old sinking fund to the expen-

diture of the country, but still leaving a surplus of between four and five millions above our expenditure to operate upon the debt, we secure a great present relief, and leave untouched the means of future defence.

FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Without going into a detail of the new system upon which Europe was settled at the period of the treaties, it may be sufficient to state, that the European commonwealth was reconstructed at this period chiefly upon three principles.

The first was, that there should be such a distribution of power among the several principal states, as might render each sufficient in itself to maintain its independence, and to withstand any possible incursion of France, till the general confederacy of Europe could move up in defence of the common tranquillity.

Secondly, but always subservient to the first principle, the restoration of ancient powers to their former state of possession.

Thirdly, where such restoration was manifestly impossible, or where it seemed expedient to forego it, in pursuit of the more valuable object of rendering each state sufficient to its own defence, in such case to indemnify the

suffering power for its lost territories from the common fund of conquest.

The system of Europe was accordingly settled upon these principles. Under the first of them, the kingdom of the Netherlands was erected, and was rendered compact and self-sufficient, by its annexation to the United Provinces. And, as the Netherlands were thus interposed as a barrier between France and Germany, Sardinia, by the annexation of Genoa, was rendered a more adequate barrier between France and Italy. Under the second principle, the Swiss Republics and Italian States were restored as nearly as possible to their ancient condition. Under the third, Austria received an indemnity in Italy; whilst Prussia, who was in some degree affected by the new changes, and who lost her ancient influence in Holland, received a portion of Saxony.—This last modification was indeed further recommended by the new state of things in Germany, and by the extinction, during the wars of the French Revolution, of the German empire. Under these circumstances, there was no longer any power in Germany sufficiently compact and united to oppose an adequate defensive force against a sudden invasion. Experience had proved that Prussia in her actual state was no equal opponent to

France, and that the exposed condition of the smaller principalities, and their compulsory submission to an invading army, necessarily threw them as increments into the hands of the invader. Nor is it necessary to conceal, that it had become expedient, upon many other considerations, to bestow this increase of territory upon Prussia, and to take it from Saxony. If the one had suffered more than any other power in Europe under the long and unsparing oppression of France, the other, to use no harsher term, was surely but little entitled to escape the penalty of a war, in which her prince had borne so prominent a part.

As such is the new system upon which Europe is now settled, our duties, under our foreign relations, consist in little more than in a faithful observance of the spirit of the treaties upon which this system is grounded. The leading principle and object of these treaties, and of the condition which they constitute, are the maintenance of the general peace of Europe by the personal amity of the sovereigns, and by a system of mediation, which should, on the one side, recognize the perfect independence of the several states in their own internal concerns; and, upon the other, should hold forth their common interest, and therein their common obli-

gation, to consult the general policy of Europe in all questions affecting the safety of the whole.

It is a malicious and most unjust representation of the character of this system to assert, that the allied powers, and England amongst them, are bound by these treaties to control the internal concerns of other states, or even to act the arbitrator in dissentions between state and state, upon interests belonging only to themselves. As regards England, the obligations of the treaties are expressed in the treaties, and our contract is known to the letter. If the ministers of some of the allied powers appear to have pressed the assertion of this right of friendly mediation into that of authoritative control, the excess belongs only to them, and no portion of it attaches to us. They find nothing of this principle in the general treaties; and accordingly the king and government of England do not admit that they are comprehended in the obligation. If the assertion of these pretensions exist at all, it is totally a separate concern of the powers that make them. But it is not perhaps too much to say, that the Holy Alliance of the present time, like the treaty of Pilnitz in the French Revolution, has no other exist-

ence, at least in the degree asserted, than in the factious writings of the day.

A very few words will explain intelligibly our different relations, and the good faith with which we adhere to the spirit of the peace. If we follow them geographically, our first relation is with Portugal, an ancient ally of the British crown, and one the most immediately indebted to us in the late war for deliverance and safety.

Under the ancient system of Europe, the object of our alliance with Portugal was to counterpoise the power of the House of Bourbon. Under the former close union of the two crowns of France and Spain, the common object of jealousy to Portugal and England was necessarily France and Spain; and the natural support of Portugal, a secondary state confining upon a powerful neighbour, was England. In the vicissitude of human affairs, the original reasons for this alliance have passed away; but in the opening of the Brazils to British commerce, a new state of things has arisen, which may render it very doubtful, and till lately much more so, whether our close connection with Portugal be not our best policy. There can be no doubt that a commercial connection with France would be more lucrative, as to a pecuniary result, than with

Portugal; and, if commerce were the only question, it would be an erroneous policy to adopt a minor state in preference to a principal. But as the maintenance of the political relations of Europe and Great Britain is an end of greater value and importance, it is a rule of sound prudence to consult the more valuable object, though with some sacrifice of the secondary one. Recent events, indeed, may render this relation of more problematical value. These events have not, however, as yet assumed a shape sufficiently determinate to justify further remarks. As regards the present question it is sufficient to observe, that the actual state of Portugal at the present period is another proof of the good faith and moderation of the British government. It can scarcely be doubted, that a monarch in the situation of the king of Portugal should not have made some friendly representation of the difficulties of his condition to the King and Government of Great Britain. It is scarcely possible, that the King of England and the other allied sovereigns can have regarded without some feeling the recent proceeding amongst the Portuguese populace. It is equally impossible for the people of England not to feel some indignation at the unworthy levity, to use no other term, with which Portu-

gal has forgotten the blood and treasure of England lavished in her defence. But, under all these circumstances, Portugal is still left to the administration of her own concerns. She is still left to work her way through her own anarchy. There is still encouragement to hope that the fire may burn out without reaching the walls of her neighbours. It remains to be seen, how far the event may justify this expectation; but in the mean time her actual condition may be assumed as no less a proof of the moderation of England, than of the true spirit of the treaties. For, under such a state of circumstances, what becomes of the alleged secret article, that all the kings of Europe should guarantee to each other the actual state of the monarchical power of each over his own subjects? Will it admit a doubt, that, under the projected constitutions of Spain and Portugal, the kings of those countries will possess a much less degree of sovereign power, and a much more arduous administration of their duties as heads of their states, than the former Stadtholder of Holland or the President of America.

Our next foreign relation, following the same local order, is with Spain.—Here our moderation has been equally tried, both as re-

gards our own peculiar gain, and as bears upon the alleged principle of defending kings at all events. In the contest between Spain and her colonies, we have held forth a different example from the former conduct of that crown between ourselves and America. It will not be denied that a strong temptation urged us. The emancipation of so large a customer could not but be most advantageous to so large a dealer as Great Britain. The free commerce with South America is nothing to other kingdoms in proportion to what it will eventually become to England. If our interest were strong, the impotence of the power to be injured (it is said without any purpose of offence) opened every thing to our mercy.—There was no restraint but in our own generosity and justice. But this restraint was sufficient. We remembered that if honesty be the best policy of individuals, who are but creatures of the day; still more so is it the best wisdom of those more durable moral persons, the κτήματα εἰς ἀεὶ, states and empires. Under these feelings the South Americans were left to fight alone. Under these feelings the gentlemen of the English Opposition have taunted, and the British manufacturers have supplicated in vain. The answer of his Majesty's

ministers to the one has been, that the faith of treaties was with them something more than a word of course; and that the weakness of a friendly power only superadded a duty of generosity to a duty of justice. To the other party they answered, that a nation had other interests besides present gain; and that if commerce be a good thing, national honor is a better.

It was under these principles that the Foreign Enlistment Bill was passed, and that our officers and soldiers were prohibited from entering into the service of the insurgent subjects of a friendly state. In the treaty signed at Madrid in 1814, it was stipulated between the governments of Spain and Great Britain, that, in performance of the duties of friendly states towards each other, his Britannic Majesty should prohibit his subjects from furnishing arms to the insurgent colonies of South America. It was manifestly within the obligations of friendly states, and the acknowledged public law of Europe, that the one power should require this engagement, and that the other should accede to it; the South American colonies being at the time a component portion of the Spanish empire, and the demand of Spain being nothing more than

a stipulation that we should not interfere in the war between her colonies and herself. As it was therefore a matter of course in the British Government to make this engagement, so it was a point of good faith to give it an effectual observance. The Foreign Enlistment Bill was but the execution of this article of the treaty of Madrid. The treaty was merely declaratory of a pre-existing duty, and neither the article nor its performance gave any thing to Spain to which she had not a previous and perfect right. Under the public law of Europe, our actual relations with Spain and South America afforded us only the choice of two courses—either that of giving positive aid to the mother-country, or of remaining in a perfect neutrality. As either of these courses was open to us, just views of our own policy decided the choice, and we adopted, as we had good right to adopt, the part of neutrality. So far only we were at liberty to consult our own peculiar interests; for though the law of nations would admit us to afford positive aid to Spain, in the reduction of her colonies, the same law prohibited us, as contrary to the duty of friendly states, from giving any assistance to the colonies. Our conduct towards South America, from the peace to the present day, has been in conformity with these

principles. With the strongest interest for assisting the Colonies, in the face of the taunts of the Opposition, and against the clamors of our traders, his Majesty's ministers have steadily adhered to the obligations of public law, and to the faith of treaties. Nor have we satisfied ourselves with a merely apparent observance of this neutral conduct. We have acted throughout as becomes the direct and high-minded character of the country. We have sent no expedition to examine the respective strength of the two belligerent parties; we have held forth no encouragement to a persevering warfare by the expectation, that a certain degree of success only was wanting to ensure our recognition and co-operation. Our language to Spain has been—You have a right to require our neutrality, and therefore we engage for it; we have, indeed, a strong interest to decline such an engagement, but we have a manifest duty to make it. To the Colonies we have said—We cannot aid you, but we will stand apart. To both we have fulfilled our duties and compact.

It is impossible upon this part of our subject, and with a view to events about closing as these observations are written, not to congratulate the country upon the full and unequivocal success of this part of our foreign

policy; by which, with safe and unimpeached honor, and against the most urgent temptations, the course of human events has at length opened this commercial field to the full extent of our possible wishes. There can be no disposition in his Majesty's ministers and their friends to undervalue the importance of a temptation which so long solicited them in vain, and to which they only preferred the sincerity of our public faith, and the integrity of our national honor. They cannot see with indifference an acquisition to general commerce at once so vast in expanse, so various in climate, so fertile in all the materials of industry and manufacture; and in that stage, moreover, of social progress, which, above all others, qualifies it to become the largest customer of a manufacturing nation. They cannot be indifferent under the well-grounded conviction, that this new field will be peculiarly open to British trade and industry, and will at once add to the supply of our stock of raw materials, and to the abundant consumption of our manufactures. They cannot be insensible to the value of a dealer, whose exports to the mother-country, under all the disadvantages of a civil warfare amongst themselves, exceeded fifteen millions; and whose imports were only of less extent under the system of an injudi-

cious monopoly. But in the proportion in which they must feel this satisfaction under the present state of things, do they feel a just pride in the conscious remembrance, that a prize of such splendor, and always lying at their feet, never seduced them from the path of national honor; and that if they have at length attained it, they have attained it with generosity and good faith—*Non cauponantes fidem,* not acting the pedlar and freebooter, but as the representatives of a great state, and of a generous and sincere people, his Majesty's ministers have at once satisfied their own honor, and dignified the character of their country.

Our relations next in order are those with the two governments of France and the Netherlands. It might be sufficient, as respects our existing relations with these states, to observe, that they are in perfect concordance with the spirit of the general treaties, and with the maintenance of the best interests of each country respectively. Our intercourse with them, so far as any events since the withdrawing of the armies have led into any, has been that of the most unreserved amity and confidence. It is manifest that in this part of our subject we are treading upon tender ground. Doubtless our advice, under circum-

stances in which the French government, from their persuasion of our longer experience in the affairs of a mixed constitution, have solicited it, has been given with equal sincerity and good-will. Doubtless, our authority itself has not been refused, where the fermenting ill-spirit during the first years of the peace required the indirect control of the expression of our continuing amity in this tone. But, on the other hand, we have cautiously abstained from any language or conduct, by which we might seem to arrogate the right of interference in the internal affairs of France. With still more delicacy have we abstained from assuming any tone of national superiority, and from employing our actual influence in procuring, or even in soliciting, any commercial regulations, which, in the existing spirit of the French people, might increase the difficulties of the king's government. We have never forgotten, that, under some circumstances, and in dealing with natures as generous as truly royal, to ask, is to have, however the concession might embarrass the princely giver, and whatever might be the true character of the gift. But considering that the best interest of England is in the maintenance of tranquillity, and in the permanent return of religion, morals, and good government, to a king-

dom so situated as France, we have passed by all single, and more peculiar objects, in pursuit of the secure attainment and confirmation of the general end. The language of our foreign relations to France has been and is—Let us see you settled and happy; let us see you occupy your due state in the system of Europe; and we will then, on equal terms, renew with you the race of glory and national wealth.

One of the measures arising from this spirit was the Alien Act, by which we at once performed a duty towards the French government, and exercised an act of immediate prudence towards our public peace at home. His Majesty's ministers retained in their minds, that the former leaders of the Whigs themselves, Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Windham, and other names of equal repute, had always entertained a strong apprehension of too free a communication with France; and, during the revolutionary war, had always anticipated, as one of the most dreaded effects of peace, an unrestrained intercourse between the bad men of France and the comparative innocence of the English and Irish Reformers. His Majesty's ministers coincided with his lordship and other Whigs, still living, in this apprehension. They could not reconcile it to themselves to superadd the lectures of M. Constant

to the orations of Mr. Hunt; nor to surrender the innocence of Mr. Cobbett, the moral and religious purity of Mr. Hobhouse, and the truth, the fixed principles, and generous warmth of Sir Robert Wilson, to any possible association with men like Fouche. Though they knew the distinction between laws and manners, between crimes and vices, between acts and opinions, and were aware that it did not belong to governments to make laws against errors and false teachers, they still felt it a duty to guard against the corruption of youth. As regarded France, these considerationss were further strengthened by the relative state of the two countries. They could not reconcile it with their sense of duty towards a friendly power to permit a depôt of plots and plotters to be established at Dover. Under all these circumstances, his Majesty's ministers conceded to the best precedents and to the best times, and recommended the Alien Act. The parliament coincided in feeling and opinion with the ministers, and the act was passed with a large majority in both houses.

As regards our relations with the Netherlands, they are too obvious to require remark. It is sufficient to say, that the amity and confidence of the two governments continue to gather strength with their progress. The

completion of the fortresses is, in fact, the completion of the due securities for the permanence of the new general system. It cannot have escaped public observation, that in Holland, as in France, there is not that warm popular feeling towards the government and people of Great Britain, to which we are assuredly most justly entitled by our long constancy in the common cause of Europe. In Holland, as in France, there exists a vulgar opinion, that the true motive of our persevering courage and conduct is to be sought in our commercial spirit; and that our government is still seeking to advance our commerce and manufactures at the expense of all other nations. However false and ungenerous may be such an opinion, it is to be lamented that it still exists. Under these circumstances, his Majesty's ministers have considered it to be a first object of policy, to avoid every kind of conduct which might cherish and increase these unfriendly suspicions. Under the same circumstances, they have declined to solicit for any commercial treaty, or to negociate for any of those facilities (for they can amount to nothing more) which would cost more to the Dutch government than they would be worth to the trade and commerce of England. But when this observation is made, it is necessary

to qualify it by the assertion, that it is very difficult to conceive the possibility of any commercial treaty between England and the Netherlands: there wants indeed all subject-matter for such a treaty. The people of the two states are in a direct rivalry with each other. The Dutch and Netherlanders manufacture almost every thing for their own consumption: they have no raw material with which to supply us, nor can we, on the other hand, supply them. They receive their colonial produce from their own planters; they grow their own wool; they import their own cotton; in a word, they exist so nearly in the same stage of commerce and manufactures with ourselves, and grow, work up, and deal, so exactly in the same articles, that there is a total want of all subject-matter of exchange between us. The large extent and various climate of France affords her some staples of her own produce, her wines and brandies, for example, upon which to found a commercial exchange; and it is certainly not impossible, but that at some more convenient period the wines of France might be admitted into England, upon the condition of the equivalent admission into France of British cutlery and hardware. But, as regards Holland and the Netherlands, it is almost impossible to disco-

ver the materials for any commercial treaty. One article alone with which we supply them, cotton-yarn, was so little satisfactory to our manufacturers of piece-goods, that, in the year 1817, a strong petition was presented to parliament against its exportation; and it required the utmost efforts of his Majesty's ministers to convince the petitioners of the folly of their demand. One observation, indeed, encounters us universally with regard to these commercial treaties. When we look collectively to the petitions of our several manufacturers, and the arguments of their advocates for new commercial treaties, and for opening a more enlarged sphere of foreign trade, they amount to nothing more than to the expression of their wishes, that all foreign markets should be opened to British commodities, whilst the British market should most religiously continue its exclusion against all foreign manufactures. Whilst all demand a free trade and an open market, not one of them is willing to surrender to foreigners any restriction in favor of their own commodities. But is it to be expected for a moment, that foreign nations will accede to a treaty under unequal circumstances? Will Portugal, or what is of more importance, will the Brazils, continue a favored consumption of British cotton and

woollen manufactures, when we shall exclude her wines, or at least withdraw our preference of Portugal in favor of France? Will the landed interest consent to a more free admission of foreign spirits in competition with our own distilleries? Can we in fact lay our hand upon any existing restriction, in favor of British trade, which the manufacturers concerned in that trade would voluntarily concede, or which could be taken from them without such a violence to the actual employment of capital, and without so much suffering to large bodies employed in the manufacture, as to render it very doubtful whether the ultimate good would be worth the present cost? As regards our present subject, Holland, it is impossible not to acknowledge, that our foreign relations can exist in no other form than at present. All closer commercial connection is impossible. The people of Holland and the Netherlands are as jealous of our manufactures as we can possibly be of theirs. The agriculturists and manufacturers of those countries are making the same demands of their government for the exclusive support of their own growth and manufacture. The crown of Holland and the Netherlands is a new institution; it is necessary for the Dutch government to concede even to the popular prejudices. Our in-

creased tax upon the Dutch provision trade, has removed still further any possibility of negociation for commercial advantages. In a word, under our foreign relations with Holland, we possess all that we can possess; the friendship and confidence of the government, and the same degree of trade to which we admit the Dutch and Netherlanders.

As regards Sardinia, Naples, and Italy in general, the spirit of our foreign relations has been directed towards the maintenance of general tranquillity. It was no part of our duty to interfere with the internal concerns of those governments, nor to take any part in such dissentions between them and their neighbours, as did not affect the due distribution of power in the system of Europe. We have no where contracted the obligation to defend these states in all their conflicts with their subjects, or each other. We have no where excluded ourselves from the question of prudence. Accordingly, when the late invasion of these states occurred, the first consideration of our own government was: is there any thing in the circumstances of these dissentions, which either affects the permanence of the general settlement of Europe, or menaces any interest peculiarly British. The answer to these questions was in the negative. No interest was

concerned but the internal state of the countries themselves. As respected England, our interference could be accompanied with no possible good, equivalent to its necessary cost. The cause itself afforded no appeal to our generosity. The Carbonari were but French reformers under another name. Under all these circumstances, and this character of the cause, our ministers had the forbearance to adhere to strict neutrality between the contending parties. But as the mere appearance of a good cause could not appeal in vain to British feelings, the English government, following the character and public opinion of the country, did not hesitate to express their own adherence to the principles of general freedom, and to guard their neutrality from any construction unfavorable to the cause of national independence. Whilst, in the exercise of a sound discretion, they adhered to a strict neutrality in fact, they fully asserted the law of nations in their diplomatic correspondence, and effectually published a declaration in recognition of the general principle. In this note, having to address themselves to friendly governments, and to states of dignity and power, they spoke with temper and moderation, but certainly not without dignity and firmness. They have yet to learn, that petulance is the due tone of offi-

cial intercourse, and that other nations are not entitled to the same courtesy from us, which we are in the habit of exacting from them. They have yet to learn, that the personal indisposition of foreign sovereigns and states, not to say their actual hostility, is a matter of such utter indifference to the government and people of England, as to be needlessly incurred by the application of intemperate language and indecorous terms to kings and emperors. They have yet to learn, that the rules of prudence and decorum in common life are not to be carried into political intercourse; and that in discussing the ordinary differences of states and governments, the tone of mediation is not more effectual, as well as more courteous, than that of arrogance and menace.

Our relations next in order, are those with Austria and Russia. As regards Austria, it is unnecessary to go into any detail; the principal point of incidental contact between Austria and ourselves having been touched upon above—Some points, however, may appear to deserve observation. One of these is, the erroneous estimate amongst our popular speakers and writers, of the character and alleged views of this government. No sovereign is perhaps more injuriously treated than the Emperor of Austria. He is not the despotic prince

which our libellous writers represent. Considering the extent of his dominions, and their exposed condition, the defensive power of the Emperor of Austria is not equal to the dignity and station of his empire in the European commonwealth. His kingdom is composed of members too distinct, having little more union than in the circumstance of their being governed by a common sovereign; whilst each member is alike suspicious, lest the force of one part should be directed towards the subversion of the privileges of the other. The power of the sovereign, under the Hungarian constitution, amounts to little more than the feudal superiority of the supreme chief over his barons. In his German states, the power of the emperor is rather patrimonial than political. In Italy, he has to contend with an adverse public opinion, and with the natural hostility of a people subjected to a foreign ruler. The local character of his dominions, and their relative situation towards each other, are equally ill adapted to compose a compact power, or to constitute a force of ready application. The greater portion of his kingdom consists of a plain level country, intersected, indeed, by large rivers, but almost totally without any defensive strength upon its frontier. The political character of Austria is necessarily governed by these cir-

cumstances of its imperfect means of protection. If the re-construction of the Dutch barrier, by means of the kingdom of the Netherlands, have given additional security to Austria on the part of France, the growth of the Prussian monarchy, and the extension of that of Russia, have introduced other and larger objects, which, in the vicissitudes of time, and in the varying policy of cabinets, may more seriously affect the safety of the House of Austria. It is far, very far from the purpose of the present observations *spargere voces ambiguas*, or to give countenance to reports which, under present circumstances, have no shadow of foundation in truth. But the prudence of states, which we call policy, has necessarily a longer reach than the precautionary wisdom of private life. It is the duty of Austria to consider the future as well as the present. The generosity and moderation of her present neighbours are their personal virtues; their successors may be more open to temptation. Under such circumstances, the situation of Austria is one of much delicacy and difficulty, and her policy necessarily partakes of this character. She must vigilantly attend to the maintenance of her actual power; she must jealously guard that system of Europe, the continuance of which is her best security, and most effectual strength. In a word, it peculiarly be-

longs to her relations to encounter, in their first re-appearance, the return of those principles, to the progress of which she would necessarily become the first sacrifice.

The tone and conduct of the British government towards Austria, have been regulated by a knowledge of these circumstances in her situation. Doubtless his Majesty's ministers well knew her difficulties, with regard to her Italian states, and as the due power of Austria is necessary for the system of Europe, they must at once have known and lamented the reluctant obedience of her Italian subjects. They could not but be informed by their resident ministers in Italy, that a very dangerous faction was gaining a most alarming strength, and that it particularly menaced the Austrian dominions. Considering the local contact of the Alpine states with France, and with that part of France which, within a very short period, had been the chief scene upon which the troubles of Europe were renewed, the British cabinet could not but entertain some apprehension for the safety of the general system. The next house had caught fire, before the flames were well extinguished in its adjoining neighbourhood. It was under these circumstances, that his Majesty's ministers deemed that the situation of Austria justified some latitude in her

defensive measures. If the Austrian government appeared to some persons, to assert too broadly the principle of this invasion, the British Cabinet deemed it sufficient, upon their part, to declare their own construction of the public law of Europe; at the same time rendering justice to the peculiar situation of Austria.

This danger, and assuredly not an inconsiderable danger, has now happily passed away. We are now instructed by events. But will it be denied in the face of these events, that experience has well justified the wisdom of the policy pursued by the British government? What might not have been the situation of Europe, if the King's ministers, following the rash but perhaps generous impulse of public opinion, and adopting the injudicious vehemence of the opposition, had immediately involved the nation in this contest. Naples would still have been over-run, and Sardinia would still have submitted. Her revolutionary army would still have been dispersed. We could have intermeddled with no other effect, than to excite an unfriendly feeling in our former allies, and to cherish the designs of the ill-disposed throughout Europe. We must have interposed, if at all, either by the exercise of our influence, or, more authoratively, by a direct declaration that the rights of nations were

invaded. If by our influence, the peril of Austria was possibly too immediate to induce her to surrender the interests of her own safety to our remonstrance and advice. If we had assumed a more authoritative tone, our naval armament, in support of our declaration, would scarcely have reached the Neapolitan seas, before the submission of Naples and Piedmont would have rendered it nugatory. What must than have been the course suitable to the honor and dignity of England? Either we must have renewed the general war for such objects, or have withdrawn with a barren exertion of our authority. To say nothing of our internal situation at this period, and of the importance of not suffering any remote and incidental object to impede us in the great work of national retrenchment.

The interests of the several European states are so involved with each other, that it is perhaps an imperfect method to enumerate, thus distinctly, our foreign relation with the several states individually. Our relations with Russia, are but little different from the same relations with Austria. Our leading object with both, has been to confirm the full confidence established at the period of the treaties. His Majesty's ministers have felt none of that jealousy towards the Emperor of Russia, to which

they have been strongly urged by the gentlemen of the Opposition. They have seen nothing in the conduct of Russia to justify such a jealousy. All the public measures of Russia since the peace, have been characterized with the sincerity and moderation of her emperor. The powers of Europe, whose dominions are in immediate contact with those of Russia, have expressed no jealousy of this kind; and his Majesty's ministers have deemed it absurd to admit apprehensions for Austria, Prussia, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, which none of those states feel for themselves. It is impossible but that much variety of opinion and feelings must exist in a court and cabinet composed like that of Russia; but it is equally notorious, that the personal moderation of the sovereign is seconded in its effect by his uncontrolled power under the Russian constitution. Ministers cannot forget, that, when the vast spoil of the French conquest was *in medio* at the period of the general peace, the Emperor Alexander contended with England in a high-minded and generous abstinence from all claims for himself. They cannot forget, that having then the power to retain, and certainly not without the strongest claims to indemnity for his sufferings during the invasion of his empire, he concurred as

fully as themselves in the restoration of kingdoms, provinces, cities, and towns, to their former possessors. Remembering this, they possibly think they do him only justice in inferring his moderation, under less temptation, by his experienced magnanimity under greater.

One event indeed has arisen which has placed the Emperor Alexander in a situation of much difficulty, and which, in some of its circumstances, has apparently given countenance to the assertions of popular writers. The insurrection of the Greeks against Turkey has necessarily involved a prince and people of the same religion with themselves. There is a strange injustice amongst our party-writers in considering the situation of the Emperor Alexander, as regards this unforeseen event. They entirely overlook circumstances obvious to all but themselves, and which stand forth upon the very face of his situation. They impute to his own seeking, and to his seeking for a selfish purpose, an extreme state of difficulties, manifestly thrown upon him by fortune. The Russian people, and of course the Russian army, are not only of the same religion, but exercise it precisely in the same form with the Greeks. The great body of the Russian population has not yet reached the high

degree of civilization of some parts of Europe. It is more simple in its habits, and at the same time less corrupted. Their hearts are most warmly attached to the religion of their country:—Their religious faith is more singly the object of their affection. We may all remember what a degree of popular clamor was excited amongst ourselves, about three years since, by some false and absurd reports of a persecution against the Protestants in a remote part of France. But if such a feeling, and upon such an occasion, was raised among our own people, whose character at the present day is assuredly not an excess of religious enthusiasm, and whose affections are subdivided amongst the hundred other objects of attachment in a rich and luxurious community; is it difficult to conceive what must be the general sensation throughout the Russian empire, where such acts, exercised against the most sacred persons of the same religious faith, were passing in adjoining provinces; and where these acts were brought home with so much increased force to their feelings and passions, by the daily reception and personal supplication of the persecuted fugitives? Is it any reasonable subject of astonishment, that, under the presence of such images, and under the daily exhortation of priests of the same

religion, a kind of epidemic indignation should run through the body of the Russian people, and that the contagion in some degree should reach the army? Far be it from the writer of these remarks to insinuate any imputation against the officers and men of an army, who in the common contest for the deliverance of Europe sustained at least their equal part. The truth is, that they could not have been men, and assuredly not the brave and generous people which they are, if they had beheld without sympathy the scenes and acts which were passing before their eyes. Under such circumstances, it is necessary to insist further upon the extreme difficulty of the situation of the Emperor Alexander in the dissentions between Greece and Turkey? Supposing for a moment, but which must not be supposed, that he did not himself partake of this feeling of his people and army; it is manifestly contrary to every rule of prudence that he should oppose himself singly and directly to this national enthusiasm. It was totally impossible to stem such a torrent by moving in a direct line across it. There are some circumstances in the general condition of a foreign state, which should be touched with the same delicacy as if belonging more immediately to the privacy of common life. It is

presumed, that enough has already been said to enable the candid reader to enter into the situation of the Emperor Alexander, and to deduce the inference, that this sovereign has not failed in his obligations to the general system of Europe.

Nor in forming an estimate of the conduct of this sovereign should it be omitted, that he most readily assented to the British protection of the Ionian Islands, and this at a period when all Europe was ringing with a clamor against his alleged designs in the Mediterranean. This act of magnanimity is, indeed, in itself an answer to all illiberal suspicions; for if the object of Russia had been the conquest of Turkey, and the ultimate appropriation of its provinces, her cabinet could never have consented to this anticipated cession of a part of her spoil, and still less could have augmented, if not established, a power in the Mediterranean that must always be opposed to the accomplishment of such an object.

At the time these observations are writing, the question of Greece and Turkey is still undetermined. In such a state of things it must be sufficient to observe, that there exists a sincere effort amongst all the powers of Europe, and with the English government in

particular, to procure a settlement of these differences upon views of general policy and a due consideration of the whole case. Their mediation between Turkey, Russia, and the Greeks, is regulated upon two main principles—the first, the termination of a state of things, which, in its ultimate consequence, may affect the general peace of Europe; the second, a security on the part of Turkey against any fanatical revenge or future excesses by her misguided populace. If the Greek insurrection, and the pending discussions between Russia and Turkey, can be finally settled upon this basis, all parties may have just cause for satisfaction. The Greeks will obtain a security against future oppression; the Emperor Alexander will have satisfied his people and himself; and Europe will have extinguished a fire, which, though beginning only on its remote circumference, but, finding fuel as it moved along, might have burned to the centre.

It is doubtless a natural wish amongst all Christian nations, that a people so connected with the fondest images of our imagination, and carrying us by associations not only to our own early lives, but to scenes and characters immortalised by poets and orators, should obtain a better return for its sufferings, and should more nearly accomplish its independence. But in this case,

as in others, where the subject is the member of a system, the question has two bearings,—there is a particular interest, and there is a general interest. As regards the particular interest of Greece only, there can exist no doubt what ought to be the wish and object of herself and friends. But as regards the general interest of Europe, and as respects the maintenance of principles, upon which the safety of all empires must stand, it is impossible that the great powers can actively co-operate in the pending contest. The very progress of this conflict, without their co-operation, holds forth such a possible state of things—so many disjointed members, and such a difficulty to effect a due disposition of them—such a disturbance in the actual state of possession, and such an uncertainty of retaining the relative equality of states by a new proportionate distribution, as to render even neutrality a very questionable prudence. *Sed incedimus per ignes.* It is one of the hard conditions of fortune that our duties are sometimes in direct opposition with our feelings. But let it not be said or thought, that Englishmen cannot feel for Greece. The wheel of human affairs, running through every possible evolution, may ultimately cast up a condition of things in which our wishes and duties may be in union;

and Greece in her freedom may delight us with a more lively resemblance of the mother from which she springs—*Turne, quod optanti, &c.*

Our relations with Turkey are necessarily comprehended in those with Greece and Russia. A word only may conclude this part of the subject:—Whatever may be the character of Turkey and her government, Turkey is *de facto* an independent power in Europe, and has a certain place and station to fill. Having such a character, it is to the interest of Europe that Turkey should possess the means of maintaining it. She cannot fail in her part without proportionately disturbing the general order. It is peculiarly the interest of England that T rkey should possess this relative sufficiency; and it is our best preventive policy to maintain her in this degree of strength. Our diplomatic intercourse with her government has always been directed towards this end. But, under present circumstances, in order to accomplish this object, it has perhaps become necessary rather to increase, than to reduce, her power. The efficiency of Turkey is counteracted by two main circumstances—her internal dissensions, and the peculiar character of her military force. But if it be our manifest policy to uphold Turkey in a certain degree of strength, it is

assuredly a violation of all principle to encourage these sources of her weakness. His Majesty's ministers are doubtless acting upon an inference so manifestly just. They can see no certain advantage in further reducing the power of Turkey, nor in concurring in any line of policy, which would effectually lead to such a reduction. They see that Turkey in her actual state gives no disturbance to the general system; but they are not equally certain, that a new state of things may not lead to very unforeseen consequences. They can see no prudence in foregoing a safe actual condition for an uncertain futurity. It is under these considerations, that the British minister at Constantinople is probably instructed to regulate his intercourse with the Turks. He is probably authorized to second the representations of the Sublime Porte to Russia, that the militia of the provinces is retained, encamped, and in winter quarters, less under any desire or apprehension of war, than with the purpose of using the occasion to reduce and extinguish the Janizaries. He is probably instructed to confirm the assurances of the Porte, that the abolition of this barbarous and fanatic force would be the best guarantee against future excesses. Under the constitution of Turkey the Janizaries are a standing army almost

independent of the government, and therefore its absolute master. They are a feudal army, a deliberating army, a military corporation; having privileges of their own, and all, officers and men, uniting in maintaining and advancing them against their sovereign and fellow subjects. It is scarcely possible not to feel for a sovereign in such circumstances, and possibly this representation has not been made in vain to the Emperor Alexander.

Our foreign relations next in order, and our last in the long list, for we pass over those with the minor states as necessarily involved in our policy towards the greater, are those with the United States of America.

It is a just observation of moral writers, that the happiest condition of human fortune is in the uniform and uninterrupted current of ordinary life, affording, from day to day, only the same unvaried aspect. The same observation may be extended generally to the relations of kingdoms, and to those between England and America in particular, which are perhaps never more satisfactory than when they least afford matter of remark. Our relations with America are those of two governments respecting the character of each other, and remembering their common origin, whilst they look around upon their different institutions.

The situation of America, and her manifest policy under it, is marked by one strong circumstance:—Of all the nations in the world, America has suffered most by the return of peace. Her commerce, her customs, and her total revenue, have been diminished, at certain periods since the peace, by more than one half. In the year 1815, the net produce of her customs exceeded thirty-six millions of dollars. In the year 1819, the produce of the same duties was only seventeen millions, being a diminution of nineteen million dollars out of thirty-six. Her total revenue, in 1815, was in round figures forty-nine and a half millions of dollars. In 1819, her total revenue was not twenty-one millions and a half. This diminution was chiefly in her customs, which declined from the cessation of her carrying trade, and the resumption by foreign nations of their own commerce.

These circumstances in her situation are of so much more importance to us, as they at once explain the causes which, in a less degree, affected ourselves, and as their operation in both countries has been in kind the same. As England, during the war, manufactured for the world, America, in a very great degree, was the carrier of the world. Even her raw produce was raised to an im-

mense price by the demand for it on the continent of Europe. There was a constant exportation of her flour to England, on an average exceeding half a million of barrels, and, in the years 1801, 1802, and 1811, exceeding a million. Her flour, cotton, tobacco, and whatever else she exported of raw produce, thus attained a price exceeding in all articles one third, and, in many, double its present amount. Her freights, her shipping, her navy — her price of land, her amount of circulating currency, her wages of labor, and her returns of capital; in a word, her agriculture, her commerce, her navigation, her internal industry and improvement, and whatever she possessed of rough domestic manufactures, increased in the same general rate as amongst ourselves. Under the general competition of one branch of employment with another, added to the universal demand for labor, and to the abundance of money in paper and cash, prices rose throughout all commodities, and in every division of industry. The general peace overtook America in this state of things. Her commerce immediately fell, and fell by nearly one half. Her circulating capital, her paper-currency, was necessarily called in, or forced back in the same proportion. Most of her banks, trading only on accommodation, broke

up, and by their bankruptcy, and the general alarm excited by it, still farther reduced or rather almost extinguished, their paper medium. Under this general state of things, prices now fell as abruptly in peace, as they had risen during the war. The cessation of a great portion of foreign demand, necessarily caused a glut of all raw produce in her markets. Prices thus fell from abundance. The withdrawing of the foreign carrying trade, and of foreign commerce in general, reduced the general income of the nation; and as this trade had been carried on in a great degree by new men, and as profits, however large, had either been expended by a more profuse mode of living, or had been embarked in augmenting stocks, (now violently rendered of less than half their recent value), income was destroyed before capitals were accumulated. Prices thus fell from the second cause of the reduced general means. The diminution of the quantum of the currency of cash and paper necessarily followed, as above said, the diminution of trade. There were fewer dealings, and of course less occasion for the medium by which they were computed. There was no security in future profits, and of course no loans nor accommodation. There was no employment for capital, and of course neither the means nor the in-

ducement to create or to continue it artificially. Prices thus fell from the third cause of the reduced quantity of money. Under this concurrence of circumstances, America has been suffering in a greater degree than ourselves, and affords a strong illustration of the actual causes of what we have seen amongst our own merchants, manufacturers, and farmers. If we have suffered, indeed, in a less degree from some of these causes, it is only because our state of society is more advanced, and that our capitalists are less dependent upon their income from year to year. The national wealth of England is composed of two descriptions, accumulated capital, and current income. The one may suffer in the vicissitudes of commerce, trade, and in the pecuniary value of produce in the markets; but the other fund is necessarily more permanent, and in a rich society will maintain a large consumption for many successive years. But in all new countries, like America, the national wealth consists in little more than in the annual income. For the time, the withdrawing of income is with them reduction to poverty.

This condition of America leads to another important conclusion, and to one more immediately bearing upon our foreign relations with her government. Of the whole actual revenue

of the United States, about twenty-five million dollars, eighteen millions are raised by her customs. Of so much importance to that government is the collection of her customs, or in other words, the continuance of her commerce. But it is unnecessary to observe, that an interest of this kind must bind her strongly to the maintenance of her pacific and friendly relations with England. It is impossible to imagine any event more injurious to the commerce of America and England than an interruption of these relations. It must be a war directly against the commerce of each other. America must at once lose three out of five parts of her national revenue, and whatever she retains of trade must disappear from the face of the ocean. England, on the other hand, would undoubtedly lose the supply of her best customer, and it is difficult to imagine any thing that she could gain.

The foreign relations of the two states have necessarily some respect towards these circumstances of their relative situation, as great commercial dealers. It would assuredly be as unjust, as it is mean, to impute the existing amity to these causes only. The governors of both proceed from a stock, with whom justice and generosity are always more than mere names, and who require no proof of interest to retain them within the

obligations of moral duty. But it is the nature of man, and indeed it is his duty, to give due weight to considerations of personal prudence. With every allowance for national generosity, the practical statesman will always see with pleasure this concurrence of interest and duty in neighbouring states. He has a good reliance, who has to deal with good faith and honor. But he has a better, who has to deal with good faith and common interest.

As to any practical subjects which have recently arisen under the head of our foreign relations with America, three circumstances of principal importance have occurred since the war, in all of which has been manifested the amicable disposition of the two states towards each other. The convention of commerce, which was to expire in 1819, has been renewed for ten years, until the year 1828. The British government has opposed no obstacle to the cession of the Floridas: but, on the contrary, has co-operated with the American minister in removing difficulties, and in influencing the Spanish government to execute the articles of their treaty with the United States. The third circumstance regards the navigation acts of the two countries. It was not consistent with British policy to extend the admission of foreigners into our colonial

trade. It would have interfered too much with the interests of our own merchants and shipping. But we did not wholly repel the solicitations of a friendly government on this head. By instituting, or at least continuing in peace, the special free port of the Bermudas, we enabled America to supply herself directly with British colonial produce, and thus saved her the expense of longer voyages, and larger freights. The American government was still dissatisfied, and in 1817, and 1818, passed her own navigation laws. We admitted her right to do so, and the friendly relations of the two governments remain uninterrupted. It may be allowed us to express a sincere hope, that the confidence and amicable intercourse of the two governments may long continue, and that the United States may rapidly recover that condition of foreign commerce, and internal trade and industry, which so long rendered them the large and liberal customers of the merchants and manufacturers of Great Britain. It will be time enough, a century hence, to think of contending interests. It is the absence of a friendly spirit to anticipate, amidst peace and good-will, the possible condition of rivalry and hostility. The sea is open to both nations, and assuredly there is no disposition in England to appropriate this highway of the

world. America has a territory, and a new and virgin territory, almost as spacious as the face of the seas themselves. She is of the same stock, and has the same materials of greatness and future glory with Great Britain. Let her use the example we have set her, and run the same race.

Such is the question as regards the integrity of our foreign relations.

HOME DEPARTMENT.

The province of the minister in this department is to maintain the general order and tranquillity of the kingdom, and to secure and superintend the due administration of the laws. In accomplishing this object, his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department has to direct his most vigilant attention to whatever may menace the internal order of the country. It is his duty to foresee and to prevent, as well as to encounter and suppress, all acts of turbulence and disorder. It is his further duty, in execution of the same object, to assist and uphold the local magistracy of the kingdom. He must employ the means of government, and apply the wisdom and learning of the

law-officers attached to its public service, to explain difficult points of duty. He must call into action the power of government to maintain the administration of the law against a populace inflamed into seditious proceedings. In preserving the peace of the metropolis, as well as of other districts, he must superintend and regulate the police. Remembering always that he is the minister of a free government, and that every department of administration should have reference to the general character of the constitution, he should execute his duties with as little cost as possible to personal liberty. He should deserve the praise that the first of all historians gave to one of the first of all ministers.—*In rebus arduis severitate, sed non asperitate utens, rempublicam composuit; unde restituta reverentia legibus, judiciis auctoritas; et sacris, et moribus, et unocuique jus et honos.* He should not apply the extraordinary means of the constitution to its ordinary perils. His weapons, and the use of them, should not exceed the call of the occasion. His first duty is to suppress the peril; his second, is to effect this purpose with as little cost as possible. In his apprehension of an extraordinary danger, he should not lose all apprehension of the certain violence to general principles by extraordinary

means. He should remember the future in the present, and that the acts of ministers of good repute, and in times above all suspicion of sinister purposes, may become precedents for their successors, who, under a general resemblance of the occasion, may most perniciously extend the example.

It is a subject of much satisfaction, that the present state of the country renders it rather ungracious to revive the memory of its condition during the first years of the peace. Except for the purpose of rendering justice to his Majesty's ministers, more especially to the noble lord who has presided over this department for the last nine years; and but for the purpose of recalling to general attention what difficulties they have encountered, and from what perils they have delivered the public peace, it would be more satisfactory to every lover of his country to pass over that period, and, under the present state of public tranquillity, to forget that the condition of the kingdom was not always so secure. It is a trite observation of moralists, that nothing is so soon forgotten as danger wholly surmounted. But it should not be entirely dismissed from the public mind, that in 1817, and the next following years, the state of public affairs required two or more Secret Committees of both

Houses of Parliament, and that these Committees, composed of gentlemen of all parties, concurred in a Report, that a most alarming degree of seditious practice existed throughout the kingdom. It should not be wholly forgotten, that this Report was verified in practice by two or more audacious conspiracies, and, after some interval, by the discovery of a most murderous plot for assassinating all his Majesty's ministers. The atrocity of this plot was assuredly not extenuated by its folly. Nearly at the same point of time large assemblies of the misguided populace were convoked from week to week in the vicinity of our manufacturing towns, and were instructed, exhorted, and inflamed, by travelling incendiaries. It is as unnecessary, as it is unpleasing, to repeat circumstances now remembered as only having been escaped. But it is surely a due want of feeling towards the difficulties of his Majesty's ministers, at that period, to forget their merits in their success. If the vessel of the state be now in port, surely some credit is due to those by whose labor she was worked through such a tempest. The danger was not under-rated at the time by a very large majority in parliament. We see what is the actual state of things under the operation of the ministerial measures then adopted. We see a condition

of present safety, and of actual deliverance. It is against all fairness to refuse imputing the effects to a cause so directly bearing upon them. What might have been the effect of other measures is at least uncertain. What has been the effect of the actual conduct of administration, is before the eyes of all of us. It is not our purpose to occupy the reader with subjects repeatedly discussed in both houses of parliament. Suffice it to say, generally, under this head of maintaining the public tranquillity and peace of the kingdom, that the attention of his Majesty's Home Secretary was invariably directed to the three main points—of encountering seditious principles at their origin, of upholding the local magistracy of the kingdom, and of not putting to risk the authority of the laws by a too frequent resort to prosecutions.

Upon some points, forbearance is self abandonment. It cannot be concealed, that in parts of the kingdom, and in some periods of this crisis, loose principles, to say nothing more, were spreading very far; and that the contagion was reaching that part of our judiciary system, which, in all countries where the noble institution of juries exists, can alone give effect to the laws. Some acquittals were at least extraordinary. Under such circumstances, it was a

manifest line of prudence, to rely more upon the menace of law, than upon the execution of law. Restraint and prevention had not only more of lenity, but more of policy, than direct prosecution. This was the principle of the measures of that period. The most immediate object was to restrain those libellers, and to check that general circulation of their cheap seditious tracts, which were the first movers of the popular turbulence. It was a point of first importance to restrain them at once; to arrest the mischief in its origin; and the law officers of the crown entertained no doubt of the legality of putting them at once under bail. The question has since been set at rest. There is no longer any doubt, that the law contains in itself this efficient control against the continuance of a crime decidedly assailing the public peace. The subject of astonishment is that there could exist any doubt upon such a proposition. Is the discretion of a magistrate to be trusted to require bail for the peace, under the apprehension of the personal security of individuals; and is the same protection to be withholden from the greater interests of the public safety? But in the one instance you have an offence committed, and a demand of sureties made. And have you not the same in the other? In the latter, only, the magistrate

represents the law, and takes the due security for the public. In both, the law trusts alike to his judgment and discretion. The oath of the party applying for bail, in private menaces or assaults, is only one of the circumstances for informing the discretion of the judge. In libel, he sees the alleged offence before him, and may reasonably infer the further peril against which he requires the security.

In conclusion of these precautions for maintaining the public peace, and for assisting, countenancing, and upholding the local magistracy of the disturbed districts, it may generally be observed, that the measures of Lord Sidmouth had all the same character and object. *Quod metus ad omnes, &c.* Their execution in practice corresponded with this moderation in purpose. They have all effected their object by prevention only. The business has been done by exciting the salutary apprehension of the seditious and turbulent. Assuredly, measures of such firmness were never executed with such moderation. The six acts, as they have been termed from their number, exist only as so many wholesome rods, suspended over the heads of the seditious leaders. The sword, indeed, hangs by a thread; but it falls not; whilst the terror of its fall restrains the audacious. The greater portion of the blasphemous and

seditious publications has nearly disappeared. If some still continue to insult the morals and good sense of the people, the resort to juries is become safe and certain. The most perilous and malignant of these libellers has become a commentator on Swedish turnips and Leghorn bonnets. In a word, at no period, perhaps, is the public tranquillity throughout England and Scotland more firmly settled than at the present. Others are suffering, and it may be added, without compassion from any quarter, the just retribution for their audacious wickedness, under the verdicts of their countrymen. In no single instance whatever, within the last four years, has government failed in its resort to juries, whether in prosecutions for treason, libel, or seditious misdemeanor; whether for the consummation of the crime in its first form, or for its origination in the latter.

It is impossible, indeed, not to congratulate the country upon the restoration of internal order. If one branch of our industry is necessarily suffering under national and accidental causes; if the surplus produce of two or three years of agriculture be still acting in England as in France, and depressing the price of corn in the market; all the parties concerned in its sale or growth still do justice to the laws and government of

the country, and impute not the necessities of nature to the negligence of ministers. They all recognise with the report of the Agricultural Committee, that protection cannot be carried further than prohibition. It cannot enter into the mind of any of them, that government can force the consumption of the country. Every reasonable expectation will be satisfied by the economy and retrenchments now in progress. It can never become the wish of an honest and intelligent people to put into peril the immediate safety of the nation; and, assuredly, the integrity of its future means of defence, by the momentary admission of any proposition affecting the public faith. What interest could promise itself a moment's safety, under the general convulsion which would follow the disturbance of property, as sacred as the title of the lands. Parliament has a natural power, and parliament has a moral power. Its natural power is to do anything: its moral power is to act only according to the obligations of justice. Parliament, therefore, has no power to cancel obligations of this kind. But are we not here fighting shadows? Under our most confirmed confidence in the honor of the country, we sincerely believe that we are; and that no proposition of this kind has any chance of finding such support as to render it an object

of momentary apprehension. The example of the United States of America will not here be lost upon us. In the year 1819, when her revenue had fallen from thirty-six million dollars to seventeen millions; a fall equivalent to the reduction of our own total income from fifty-six millions to twenty-five; and when, under these circumstances, there was a faint proposition about reducing the interest of the national debt, the government and congress rejected it with indignation. As respects ourselves indeed, could the proposal only be made; could the mere mention in parliament only be admitted, without causing such a panic, and thereupon such a violent reduction in the price of stocks, as would at once introduce general disorder and ruin? One act of meditated violence would lead in the instant to the necessity of another, and a law must be passed to prevent the sale of stock in the interval between the discussion and settlement of the question. Whilst France is paying more than six per cent. upon her national stock, and whilst her security is such as it actually is, what could prevent the stockholders, under the starting of such a proposition, from the instant transfer of their funds. But it is unpleasant to any mind of due feeling to dwell upon the bare probability of a measure of this kind. In re-

gular governments, there is no gradation of value in the titles of property. All titles in the eye of political justice are the same; they all rest alike on the faith and integrity of the laws of the country.

But enough upon this point. We rest assured, that they were not mere words of course, which, upon the close of the session of parliament in the year 1819, the speaker of the House of Commons so eloquently addressed to his Majesty—"We feel satisfied, that at "this period, and at every other, there is no "difficulty which the country will not en- "counter, and no pressure to which she will "not willingly and cheerfully submit, to ena- "ble her to maintain, pure and unimpaired, "that which has never yet been shaken or "sullied—her public credit, and her national "good faith."

As regards the particular measures which are connected with the improvement and maintenance of the internal order of the kingdom, and which may, therefore, more properly fall under this part of our subject; the principal are the acts for maintaining the due administration of law in Ireland; the encouragement of fisheries and public works, for the employment of the poor; the revision and consolidation of the laws affecting the clergy; the pri-

son discipline, the gaol consolidation, and police bills. To which may be added, several minor measures, either immediately introduced by government, or most cordially supported by the ministers, in aid of the internal order and economy of every part of the United Kingdom.

Of these objects, the first in importance, is the improvement and restoration of the due administration of law in Ireland. As the magistracy of Ireland have an immediate official correspondence with the Irish secretary, and, through him, with his Majesty's secretary for the Home Department, the fullest memorials of its actual condition were, of course, transmitted to this latter office. It is only justice to the minister of that department to state, that all these memorials received his most anxious attention. The representations from all quarters were duly weighed and considered; a work of incredible difficulty, as will appear from a very summary abstract of their substantial proposals and complaints.

In proceeding with this brief exposition, it must be again premised, that the object of these observations is a defensive statement, to which a liberal latitude must be necessarily given. Far, very far, is it from our purpose to sow any seeds of distrust and discontent between any classes of men. But it must be al-

lowed to the friends of his Majesty's ministers to repel any unjust imputation upon the government of the country, though with the effect of transferring it in some degree to individuals, who inconsiderately, perhaps, but assuredly, in fact, are the chief causes of their own misfortunes.

The memorials upon the state of Ireland, and upon the actual causes of its internal disorders, comprehend a long list of grievances; the principal of which are, absenteeship, disproportionate rents, the want of all poor laws, the comparatively defective state of industry, illicit distillation, the uneducated state of the poor, superabundance of population, and the want of employment. To which may be added, as two of these heads of complaint in point of fact, (whether just or unjust) the inefficiency of the local magistracy and police, and the want of a permanent Insurrection act.

The first complaint, therefore, according to these channels of representation, is the mischief of absenteeship, as it is termed, by which they mean the non-residence of the landed proprietors, and which non-residence some of the memorialists most absurdly impute to government. In considering this complaint, his Majesty's ministers doubtless saw, that the question distributed itself into two

points of inquiry; the first, was it a mischief and in what extent; and secondly, did it admit of any remedy on the part of government?

As to the first of these points, they were probably forced to conclude, that, under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, the question admitted of no doubt. It could not escape their observation, that absenteeship existed to a most enormous extent, and that it was, and is, productive, in a very great degree, of the continuing misery and distress of the people. In a rich, active, and industrious country like England, where agriculture, commerce, and manufactures exist in such an extent, as to afford occupation to the population, in a ratio nearly co-extensive with its amount, the absence of a few hundred landed proprietors is of no national importance. They are not the chief customers of the national agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. England works for the civilized world, and not merely for its own country gentlemen. Accordingly, the casual absenteeship of English gentlemen, in the course of their travelling, or long abode abroad, is totally without effect upon the large subject-matter of English consumption. The withdrawing of their expenditure is like the abstraction of a drop from a running stream, and, in a national consideration, is wholly with-

out any momentary importance. But, in a country like Ireland, where there is so little of commerce and manufactures, and a most imperfect and narrow agriculture, the system of absenteeship, is necessarily productive of extensive mischief. It is the absence of the national protectors, benefactors. and sole employers of the great body of the nation. It is the withdrawing of a large demand for labor, from a country which requires that demand in every possible shape. It reduces, and has reduced, the Irish poor to a similar state with what was the condition of the English poor in the age of Henry the Eighth, and in the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when the suppression of the monasteries turned them loose upon the nation at large, and rendered necessary the enactment of the poor-laws. It spreads hopeless poverty, irremediable ignorance, and barbarous ferocity, through the population. It substitutes the interested overseer, the avaricious, or at least trading, middleman, the ignorant, and therefore comparatively unfeeling factor and agent for country gentlemen and landlords, whose interests, education, and habits, would lead them to the improvement and assistance of their tenants, and of the peasantry in their neighbourhood or estates. It nearly eradicates charity, the last refuge of

the poor and miserable. As regards this head of complaint, and its effect upon Ireland, it can scarcely therefore be contended, that the complaints of absentee landlords, and of the evils thereby caused, are overcharged.

The next alleged evil in these memorials was in the oppression of the poor tenants, and of the poor in general, by rents enormously disproportionate to the value of the land. This, up to a certain extent, is true, and is likewise a peculiar evil in the condition of the Irish. In England the price of labor, and the wages of all kinds of industry, necessarily keep down the price of land to the level of its actual worth, and accordingly, as we see under present circumstances, any demand of extravagant rents would remedy itself—no one would give it. The answer would be, I make more by my daily labor as a husbandman, a manufacturer, or an artizan. But in Ireland, where there is no such demand for labor in agriculture, manufactures, or internal industry, the poor laborer has no choice—he must procure his quarter of an acre of ground for potatoes, or he must starve. Every poor Irishman is in the same need and in the same condition; they accordingly bid each against the other, and their necessity and their competition have enormously increased the price

of land. Again, as population always keeps pace with the quantity of food upon which life can be sustained, and as an acre of potatoes (however miserable such kind of food may be) will feed twice the number of human beings which an acre of wheat will feed, the Irish poor go on daily increasing, and more distressed objects are daily growing up to bid against those already in the market, and to effect still further this ruinous subdivision of the land into small portions and patches. Every patch, in fact, thus produces a new family; every member of a family a new patch and so on. Hence an enormous population, and an enormous rent for these small divisions. Hence a country covered with beggars—a complete pauper-warren. Under this head of grievance it was equally impossible to insist that the statement was much overcharged; but what remedy did this admit on the part of government? If, by the fundamental principles of our constitution, every individual amongst us is the uncontrolled master of his own person, except when the state requires his service under an obligation common to all classes of subjects, still more is he master of his own property. A particular law against personal liberty, or a particular statute against the unqualified dominion of a

proprietor over his own property, would be alike an invasion of the first principles of our constitution. Under these principles, the two first heads of complaint—absenteeship and high rents—admitted but the same answer; they belong to manners, and not to laws; to the native, local gentry, and not to the United Parliament.

The third alleged cause is the want of employment and of capital; the absence of almost all manufactures but linen; and the comparatively defective state of industry. It was equally impossible to deny the existence of this head of causes; but it is at least equally absurd to impute the existence of this condition to government. In England, the employment of the poor is distributed through agriculture, commerce, manufactures, internal trade, the mechanic arts, and the supply of the large consumption of a highly civilized, rich, and luxurious people. The circulating capital of the country may possibly employ about three-fourths of its laboring population; the income of accumulated capital, expended only in consumption, affords nearly a full employment to the remainder. In Ireland, the amount of capital circulating in trade is assuredly very little; and the amount of income from capital formerly accumulated, or the fruits of savings

from large incomes, bears a very small proportion to the same species of income in England. Whilst the population of Ireland is nearly one half of that of England, the consumption of Ireland of all articles of elegance, convenience, and luxury, is less than one-tenth of that of England. The gross actual receipt of the excise for England, in the year ending the 5th of January, 1821, was upwards of twenty-seven millions; whilst the same receipt for Ireland was little more than one million nine hundred thousand pounds. It is true that the excise of the two countries does not comprehend entirely the same articles, nor in many cases the same duties; but there is nearly the same disproportion of one to ten, if the produce of the same commodity in the one country be compared with its produce in the other. It is therefore perfectly true that Ireland contains at once a great redundant population, and a very inadequate employment for its laboring classes. The unfortunate system of subdividing the land, in some of the counties, into an infinite number of small tenements, is the undoubted cause of the redundant population. Every acre is thus made to produce as many mouths as it can miserably feed. In the inconsiderate language of her best poet, every rood of land maintains its man. Hence a de-

fect of agricultural capital, and hence likewise, as unhappily proved by experience, an invincible temptation to idle and vagabond habits in the Irish poor, from the absence of the necessity of the owners of these tenements and their families to procure the food of the day by the labor of the day. May the example become a salutary lesson to England of the effects of the minute subdivision of the soil, and of the absurdity of that loose and idle declamation, which would relieve the current distress of the poor by distributing amongst them the wastes and commons of the country.

It was impossible therefore to deny the justice of this head of complaint; but what remedy does it admit on the part of government? Is England to supply capital for the Irish manufacturers and agriculturists? Would the supply of such capital be of any effect under the actual condition of the Irish? Is money wanting, or is trade wanting? But do we not in fact actually contribute a portion of this capital? At whose expence are the linen bounties paid? To whom is Ireland indebted for the continuance of this tax, but to the United Kingdom, for her peculiar benefit? In aid of whose manufacture do we further violate every just principle of commercial policy, by a continuation of the transit duties on fo-

reign linen? Upon what principle, except upon that of a free gift to a sister kingdom, can the imposition of such duties, operating as general restraints upon trade, be justified? Is it not in fact so much given to Ireland by England? The Scotch poor are assisted by the sums voted for the completion of the Caledonian Canal and other public works in Scotland. The Irish poor are assisted by the linen bounties, and transit duty on foreign linen.

Nor should it be omitted under this head, that the Irish poor are further assisted by several distinct acts for the improvement and extension of the fisheries on the coast of Ireland. The first and principal of these acts, the 36th Geo. III., has been continued and extended by the 59th of the same king. Whilst the progress of just commercial principles has induced the government and legislature of Great Britain to relieve themselves as much as possible of the system of bounties; whilst in some branches of our peculiar industry these bounties have entirely ceased, and in others are gradually reducing, such favor has been afforded to the particular condition of the laboring classes in Ireland, that, with respect to them, the ancient bounties are still continued, and others have been recently superadded and augmented.

It has never escaped the parliament of Great Britain, that, under the erroneous principles of our ancestors a century back, Ireland was called upon to sacrifice her incipient woollen trade, and that the parliament of England then contracted the obligation to favor her linen manufactures. In discharge of this obligation we have always given an exclusive support to this staple manufacture of the sister kingdom. It is unnecessary to call to the remembrance of the Irish manufacturers, what difficulty our merchants have to encounter in forcing the Irish linens on the South American markets, and how urgently the English government has been solicited to make such a change in the present system as would admit the exportation of assorted cargoes.

The next cause of complaint is the absence of all poor-laws. As a cause of distress, there can be no doubt that it is justly alleged; but, under the experience of the effect of these laws in our own country, there can surely be no encouragement to extend the same system to Ireland. But the absence of all provision of this kind unquestionably aggravates the condition of the Irish poor. They are not only miserably poor, but are poor without refuge. They have no resort but in mendicancy and vagrancy. Hence another fertile source of

internal dissensions, and hence that clannish and congregating spirit common to the Irish of the present day, and to the Scotch of former times. Without fixed residence, without a home, without a parish, and without any circumstances to render them local, or to attach them to a particular spot, they have a natural propensity to herd together in masses, and to form those irregular brotherhoods and societies by which the peace of Ireland is continually assailed. Doubtless this is a very unhappy condition of society; but what remedies does it admit? Is it not one of those general states arising from remote circumstances long continued, which can only be cured by the gradual influence of equal laws, regular government, and by the example and infusion of a more disciplined people? With what justice is this barbarous state of the Irish poor (if so it must be called) to be imputed to the government of England, whose manifest and unquestionable interest it is to remedy it, and who, by local institutions and general laws, have attempted to do so. But the effect of centuries is not to be cured by the regulations of a day: it is totally impossible to civilize a people by act of parliament. All that can be done is done. To the sacrifice of our own interest we consume nearly exclu-

sively the peculiar manufacture of Ireland. In despite of the jealousy of our landed interest, we admit her corn of all kinds equally with that of our own counties. We know no distinction between English and Irish industry. We confine and limit to her the West India market. We force her commodities upon South America. We provoke retaliating prohibitions from the Netherlands by the exclusive admission of her butter and provision trade. To say all in a word, we foster a trade which will not be fostered; we cherish and invite the augmentation of her existing manufactures, and the origination of others; but unhappily we cherish and invite in vain. But to put this question in the strongest point of view—The exports of Ireland, for the year ending January 5th, 1821, to England and all parts of the world, amounted to seven millions; of which portion England alone took more than six millions, and the remainder was the amount of her total exportation to all other quarters of the globe. Such unhappily is the comparative state of English and Irish industry; an effect from causes too deeply rooted to admit of any sudden cure.

The next alleged cause is the effect of illicit distillation.

Unhappily, this feature in the condition

of Ireland is sufficiently obvious, and is at once a cause of distress and a circumstance of disorder. But this practice likewise arose from the two peculiar circumstances in the general condition of the Irish population—the non-residence of the native gentry, and the imperfect civilization of the lower orders. The pernicious propensity to the extravagant use of spirituous liquors always exists strongest in societies approaching nearest to a state of nature. The use of such excitements is the sole remedy for the painful listlessness of savage life. The imperfect civilization of the Irish poor leads them to this sad resource. The absence of their native gentry removes the supervision and control of their natural protectors. They are thus left to themselves, and follow where the precipitate misery of their condition leads them. But the habits of smugglers are from the outset the habits of outlaws; they become too easily, and by too natural a progress, the habits of more atrocious criminals. There can be no doubt both of the bearing of this cause on the general distress of the country, and of its extent. But, on the part of government, no efforts have been neglected to check the progress of this mischief.

In the year 1820, a bill was introduced into

parliament, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for extending the practice of Scotland into Ireland, and allowing the use of small legalised stills, of a capacity to contain not less than a hundred gallons, by all persons who should make a proper entry. It is to be hoped that this measure will have the same beneficial effect in Ireland as in Scotland, where it had assisted both landlord and farmer by raising the price of oats and barley, and facilitating the consumption of the produce of those articles in the vicinity. If this measure, and other measures directed against the evil of illicit distillation, should turn out to be nugatory, the fault surely cannot rest with his Majesty's ministers. The principle of this measure was solicited by the Irish members themselves, as the representatives of the public opinion in their own country.

It was only with the same purpose of effectually eradicating this most mischievous practice, that the government so long maintained the salutary measure, originally introduced into the Irish parliament, that of making districts responsible for unlicensed stills discovered within their precincts. But the Irish gentry themselves complained of the extreme severity of this law, and in compliance with the general feeling his Majesty's ministers con-

sented to relax it. The Irish Still Fines Bill was brought in with this purpose. But so sensible were his Majesty's ministers of the real character of this measure, and of its merely partial utility, that they accompanied the introduction of the bill by observations almost protesting against it. But the Irish members insisted, and the bill was accordingly carried. If illicit distillations have since increased, if the stewards, middle-men, and resident factors, of absentee proprietors, have since countenanced this practice—if the produce of the illicit still be employed to pay the exactions of these sub-landlords—if a system of most pernicious toleration, not to say actual connivance, have originated upon a repeal of the old acts: if the charges of the judges, and the exhortation of the superior orders of magistrates, be nullified by the known practice of men of power and influence, immediately resident amongst themselves; if all these evils have arisen from the effectual repeal (for so it may be called) of the old Still Fines Bill, the fault must not at least be imputed to his Majesty's ministers.

The next, and last alleged head, comprehends in substance some loose complaints against the local magistracy of the country, and a more formal recommendation, that go-

vernment should try the effect of stronger measures. In a brief examination of this head, the inquiry distributes itself into the two points—first, whether stronger measures were required at the period of this recommendation, 1820; and, secondly, whether a state of things may not arise (perhaps has arisen since) which may unquestionably require the introduction of stronger restraints.

In the year 1820 his Majesty's ministers certainly declined the application, on the part of some gentlemen, magistrates of Ireland, to renew the provisions of the Insurrection Act. They saw no necessity for the renewal of this act under the circumstances of those times. The existing statutes appeared to have produced their full effect. The memorials alleged disturbances in Galway, Clare, and Mayo. But the disturbances in Clare and Mayo had been effectually suppressed by the active efforts of the resident gentry. The disturbances in Galway had been more considerable, but they had been suppressed in that county likewise by the concurrent effect of the zealous efforts of the local magistracy, and by the Peace Preservation Bill. Thus government saw no necessity, at that period at least, for any measure required by the failure of the existing acts. Nor was there any thing in the character of

these extraordinary measures to recommend their adoption upon their own merits. Experience had taught the true character of this system. If it put down the evil for the present, it cherished its re-appearance with increased malignity for the future. It put out the fire by kicking about the brands. It repressed the disturbance for the time, but provoked retaliating passions, which afterwards broke out with increased outrages. His Majesty's ministers acted under these principles. They saw the necessity of doing something for the Irish people in the way of gradual discipline. It was more consonant with their personal feelings to conciliate than to menace, and amongst means equally efficient for the same end, to prefer those of lenity, moderation, and forbearance.

As to the second point of the question, whether a state of things may not arise to render necessary a resort to stronger measures; it admits only of one answer; that, under the actual state of the country, composed of such elements, a condition of this kind unquestionably may arise. But it will then be time enough to consider the necessity of such measures. Assuredly, unless under circumstances of actual necessity, it would be contrary to the benevolence of government to renew the

Insurrection Act. Is it forgotten, that this statute is almost the Curfew act of King William. It forbade the inhabitants of the disturbed districts to be absent from their houses from sun-set to sun-rise. It established a perpetual sessions, composed not of judges, but of magistrates. Every person apprehended might be taken on the spot to this sessions, and, without a grand jury, or a petty jury, on the sole opinion of the magistrate of these sessions, be condemned to transportation for seven years. But will it ever be objected to a British ministry, that under the influence of another system of government, and personally accustomed to an administration upon different principles, they felt a natural reluctance to renew the provisions of an act of this kind, and that they were slow to invest themselves with this tremendous power. If they had consulted only the facility of administration, they would naturally have coveted the possession of a power, which, however severe towards its objects, must necessarily be effectual in its end. If they had consulted only the present interest, the readiest means were the best, and the most powerful were the readiest. But they could not forget that Ireland had suffered much under the erroneous system of former times, and that in the ex-

cesses committed by her population, there was much to commiserate, as well as to punish. Upon these principles, the administration of Irish affairs has been directed towards the two objects—of attempting improvements by a gradual return to the ordinary progress of law and government; and applying force only to those occasions, where local disturbances might demand it. If new excesses, and in an alarming degree, should require the renewal of the Insurrection Act, renewed it must be, however the occasion may be lamented.

To any one who will cast his eyes over the history of Irish legislation, for the last twenty years, these remarks will be obvious. From this principle of amelioration by measured steps, and by bringing round the habits of the people to the influence of better morals, as well as of fixed laws, have arisen innumerable acts. By the Irish Peace Preservation Bill, his Majesty's ministers endeavoured to return, by one step, towards the maintenance of public order in Ireland by the ordinary administration of justice. This act was a departure from the severity of the Irish Insurrection Act; retaining so much only of the rigor of that statute, as was unhappily still necessary to restrain the excesses of the disturbed districts. The object of this act was to assimilate, as nearly as possible

the local administration of the law in the two kingdoms. If the local magistracy of Ireland, (it is said, without offence, and speaking only generally, and with numerous exceptions) be still very far removed from the character of the country magistracy in England, the fault is not from any want of effort on the part of his Majesty's ministers, but in that prominent feature in the condition of Ireland—the absence of her great local proprietors. It is impossible for government to work without suitable subject-matter. It is impossible to procure in Ireland the same weight, condition, habits, and respectability, which characterize the magistracy of England. It was under the sense of this inconvenience, that Government endeavoured to repair it by a provisional magistracy, appointed from the bar. Here again, is another example of difficulties; the intentions of his Majesty's ministers have been illiberally slandered; this most salutary measure being imputed more to a desire of augmenting their patronage, than of improving the local administration of the laws. The Grand Jury Presentment bill was a measure of similar character. Its object was to cure an abuse leading to much practical oppression. But a still more useful measure of the same kind, was the sacrifice of Government of its ancient appoint-

ment of sheriffs of counties. Here, ministers gave up a very important portion of the patronage of the crown. But it is unnecessary to enter into further detail of the numerous measures flowing from the same principle; that of gradually amending the administration of law in Ireland, and of departing, step by step, from that extreme and rigorous system, which had affected the good-will of the two countries.

It is but just however to add, in conclusion of this subject, that none of the present distractions in Ireland can be ascribed to religious differences—Catholics and Protestants are alike sufferers and aggressors. It is but rank faction, therefore, to refer her present state to tythes, taxes, and the absence of a complete Catholic emancipation.

So much upon the general administration of the Home Department. But it would be ungenerous to conclude this part of the subject, without the expression of the public obligation to the noble lord, so long at the head of this office. It is surely not too much to say, that in the execution of his arduous, and it must be added, his invidious functions, he has carried the virtues of his private character into the performance of his public duties. In the history of the last ten years, his long administration of this department will be character-

ized for its lenity, moderation, conciliation, and benevolence. Most truly, his office has been no sinecure. Most truly, it has had nothing of that *secura quies*, that *otium cum dignitate*, which every one must now wish him to enjoy.

The ordinary branches comprehended under this department have been before mentioned. But it has not been mentioned, that this high officer has likewise the administration of the most painful duties of the executive. It belongs to him, in great measure, to designate the objects of punishment, and royal clemency. But mercy, like justice, has still the sword for her emblem, and must participate in the invidiousness accompanying the performance of her austere duties. What she spares, is too often forgotten in what she is seen to strike. Her blows make a more forcible appeal to the senses, than the exercise of her lenity and compassion. But is it necessary to insist, that, under the administration of this high officer, this branch of the prerogative has been aided by the feelings and sympathies of private character; and that no one has suffered whom any public consideration could admit to escape.

COLONIAL DEPARTMENT.

The next division of public business is the Colonial office, which, for the sake of comprehending a more enlarged view of the subject, may be considered in conjunction with the Board of Trade, though not officially belonging to this department.

It has been stated in a former part of these observations, that our colonies admit of a convenient distribution into the two classes, of the Old Colonies and the New Colonies. Without insisting further upon this division, it will be sufficient, as regards the present head, to confine our attention to the three principal subjects of Canada, Jamaica, and the Free Port islands in the West Indies; adding a few observations upon the Cape of Good Hope, and the Ionian islands. These heads will conveniently embrace the actual principles of our Colonial system.

It has been too much the practice of popular writers to undervalue the possession of Canada. Canada is of three main uses to the British empire—The first, that of constituting a point of contact with the United States; secondly, that of administering to the maintenance of the British navy, by the employment

of a large amount of tonnage, and by the formation of seamen in long and rough voyages; and thirdly, that of consuming a very considerable portion of our manufactures.

Under the first of these heads, it has been the policy of successive administrations to regard the posesssion of Canada as a point of primary importance. It would be ungracious to anticipate events yet hidden behind the clouds of time, and which every man hopes may be of very remote occurrence. But, as empires are not the creatures of the day, political prudence must extend its reach beyond the precautions of a living generation :—*Quid brevi fortes jaculemur ævo*, is not a rule of political wisdom. In the vicissitudes of human affairs, a breach with America is assuredly not an impossible event. But if former stasesmen have justified the retention of Gibraltar, a point of much more questionable wisdom, upon the sole ground of its affording a position on the Peninsula, and a port and station in the Mediterranean; and if the experience of the last fifty years has sanctioned this policy; how much stronger is the argument for the same provisional precaution with regard to British America, and the West Indies. In any future war, a large naval force could be promptly applied from this quarter to the American seas.

Possibly, this may be considered as of no inconsiderable importance.

Under the next head, the seamen and tonnage engaged in trading with Canada are not to be overlooked. They compose a very material proportion in the total amount of our navigation. It has been before mentioned, that the vessels employed in our trade with Canada amount to nearly one fourth of the tonnage of the British empire: add to this consideration, her supply of timber in any event of a war with the northern powers of Europe. Under the third head, the consumption of British manufactures in Canada exceeds the amount of the consumption of the East Indies. A further and a final circumstance, not to be omitted, arises from the late American navigation laws. Under the operation of these laws, our West India Colonies, without the aid of Canada, would be subjected to great occasional distress. So much as to the importance and value of Canada.

The colony next in order is Jamaica. It has been stated in a former part of these observations, that this colony is of the utmost importance to the revenue, wealth, and navigation, of the British empire. It is the chief place for the growth of sugar: the corn of the Tropical world, and now become so much an ar-

ticle of necessity throughout civilized Europe, and so largely consumed, that, in value and importance, it occupies the next place to the agricultural produce of our own lands. As regards revenue, the gross receipt of the customs for sugar amounted in the year 1821 to five millions; a sum exceeding by two hundred thousand pounds the gross receipt of the whole revenue for Ireland. As respects its comparison with corn, the gross actual receipt of the excise for all the malt duties of England, in the year 1821, was four millions and a half. The gross actual receipt for the sugar duties, as above stated, exceeded five millions. If we add to this sum the amount of the revenue on the colonial articles of rum, tobacco, and snuff, cocoa-nuts, and coffee, pepper, indigo, spices, and drugs, it will appear that the customs and excise on our colonial produce afford little less than eight millions two hundred thousand pounds to the revenue of Great Britain. Now the total of all the sums raised upon the land in Great Britain and Ireland, under the several heads of beer, malt, hops, and land-tax, for the year 1821, was in gross receipt about nine millions. So just is the claim of our sugar colonies, indeed of our colonies in general, to a degree of political relation next only to our landed interest—*nec longo intervallo proximus.*

So absu rd are all the systems, which, for the temporary purpose of inviting particular attention to one interest only, invidiously exclude and undervalue all others.

Of the total amount of colonial produce, Jamaica alone exports annually one hundred thousand hogsheads of sugar, employing twenty thousand tons of British shipping and five thousand British seamen, and affording two millions net receipt to the revenue of the country. Of such value and importance is Jamaica. As regards the general conduct which has been observed in the civil policy and administration of this colony, suffice it to say, that it has received a protection equivalent to its importance. Whilst a necessary concession to public opinion has compelled his Majesty's ministers to carry the scythe of retrenchment into all the military stations in the empire, and whilst the means of public defence, not to employ stronger terms, have been thus curtailed to a very narrow point, ministers, through all the embarrassments occasioned by this clamor, have retained nearly its original force on the Jamaica station.

The next point for consideration are the Free Ports, so wisely established and enlarged in the West Indies, and particularly those in the Bermuda Islands. Enough has already

been said of the general purpose for which these free ports were first established, and with a view to which end they have been continued and extended during peace. It is here sufficient to repeat, that the object of their maintenance is two-fold; the one, reflecting much honor upon the political generosity of the country; the other, more particularly directed to the maintenance and advancement of our own interest. The first of these ends was to afford a more convenient magazine of colonial supply to the United States, and thus to save the people of America the double voyages and expensive freights from that country to Great Britain. This object was necessarily attended with some sacrifice to the interest of our own shipping and navigation, and was so far a departure from our ancient system. But we deemed that friendly states had some claim upon us, and we cheerfully made the concession. The second head of the free port system, which in some degree indemnifies us for the sacrifice under the first, was to promote a larger consumption of West India produce, and to procure a preference for our own colonies. Both these ends have in a great degree been fulfilled. If the passing of the American Navigation Law have cut off the former direct commerce between our West India islands and

America, the Bermuda Free Port system has repaired the inconvenience, and the United States may still receive our colonial produce without a voyage to Europe. It is sufficient here to add, that in the colonial administration every facility in practice has been given to this system, and that every regulation has been made to remove impediments to this beneficial intercourse. Possibly, the real and solid advantages of this relaxation from our colonial monopoly will be hereafter much better understood. The system, in its present liberal extent, is new both to our colonies and to the traders of the United States. In our own colonies, a sufficient capital is not perhaps yet embarked to reap the full advantage of a market so calculated to enlarge itself. Possibly, the present description of traders in these Free Ports is not exactly qualified to give a due effect to such a system. Larger capitals, and merchants more exercised in the habits of national trade, will necessarily lead to smaller profits and lower prices; and thence to a larger dealing and consumption by the United States. It is impossible not to acknowledge that the frame-work is excellent, and in every respect consistent with liberal policy and just commercial views.

The next subject in order is the Cape of

Good Hope—a vineyard, and assuredly, at no distant period, a granary under the most favorable climate in the world. It would be as absurd to judge of the importance of the Cape from what it actually is, as it would be to estimate the value of Virginia and Maryland by what they appear to have been in the time of Charles the Second. The Cape of Good Hope, as an appendage to the British empire, is in every respect an infant colony. The quality of her vineyards is such as it now exists from the absence only of a due capital and competition. It is impossible to foresee, how far into the interior of Africa the characteristic spirit, activity, and intelligence, of British colonists may push the boundary of this promising settlement. But every new colony, and every augmentation of population and culture in those already possessed, necessarily enlarge the market for the reception of British commerce and manufactures. It is in the very nature of the produce of manufactures to increase from year to year, and to become so depreciated in current price by their excess, as to occasion great distress amongst large bodies of men. It is an object of sound policy to encounter this mischief by precautionary measures. But the only measure of this kind is to provide for a proportionate augmentation

of consumption. It is under this principle, that no efforts have been spared by our colonial administration to assist the culture and population of our new colonies. The emigrants to the Cape were sent with this view; they were *selected* with this view. Happily the present condition of this colony affords no subject of further remark. Under the general administration of the Colonial Department, and the exemplary execution of their duties by the local authorities, no settlement of this great empire affords a more cheerful aspect.

The same attentive consideration has been given to the state of the Ionian Islands. We have faithfully fulfilled our duties as their protector;—we have purified, as much as in us lay, the inveterate evils of the old administration;—we have raised the character of the inferior classes of the people, and have reduced the feudal chiefs to obedience of the laws. They no longer afford the most disgraceful spectacle in the midst of civilized Europe—a people without law, private morals, or public honor. In process of time we may contribute as much to their culture and commerce, as we have already done to their laws and morals. A promising fruit trade may hereafter become of proportionate importance to our foreign trade.

BOARD OF TRADE.

It will not require a long examination to shew that the Board of Trade has performed its duties to the public, and that the industry, manufactures, and commerce of the country have received many solid benefits from its deliberate attention. These services may be distributed under the general heads of the Navigation Acts, the Warehousing System, the removal of numerous prohibitions and impediments under the Restrictive and Protective Statutes, an augmentation of the sphere of the Colonial Trade and of British Commerce, and the simplification of the laws relating to Forfeiture, Regulation, and Customs.

Under the head of Navigation Laws, the board has been long occupied in a most useful and laborious investigation of the complicate system of these statutes. The result of its labors has been the preparation of several measures, which will probably become acts of the legislature in the session now ensuing. The enactments of these laws will possibly confer more upon British commerce than it has received within the last hundred years. They will assist the business of the general merchant; they will advance the trade and commerce of

the country, foreign, colonial, and domestic; they will remove much grudge and jealousy in foreign nations, without any proportionate sacrifice of our own peculiar interests.

It of course does not fall within the possible purpose of a short pamphlet to enter into a review of the involved and laborious system of our Navigation Laws; but, in justice to the labors of this department and its able Presidents, a few observations are required, and a few only will be sufficient to explain their public services under this part of the subject.

It is scarcely necessary to premise, except for the sake of order, that British commerce, with reference to the Navigation Laws, is distributed into the five heads: the European trade, the trade to Asia, Africa, and America, not being colonial—the Colonial Trade, the Coasting Trade, and the Fisheries. The Navigation System is composed of a class of rules arranged under these titles, and applicable to each. With respect to the European trade, the rule is, that all goods, the produce of Europe, shall be imported into England in three species of ships only—in British built ships; in ships of the build of the country or place of which such goods are the growth; or in ships of the build of the port or place which is the usual place of the shipment of such goods.

With respect to the trade beyond Europe, not being colonial, the general rule is: that the growth or manufacture of such country can be imported only *direct* in British ships; such importation to be made either from the place of growth or manufacture, or from the usual place of shipment only. The three rules of the Colonial Trade, Coasting Trade, and Fisheries, are merely exclusive of all ships but those of British build and ownership. Such, speaking in general terms, is the outline of our Navigation System.

But however wise the general system of these laws, and most wise has it been proved by the experience of its effects, the exact and rigid application of all the above rules has been attended with particular mischief pressing hardly upon general trade. The first rule, for example, consists of two parts, the former of which confines the importation of European goods to British ships, to ships of the build of the country, and to ships of the build of the usual place of shipment. By a second part of this rule, an invidious and most groundless exception is made against the produce of Holland and the Netherlands; certain articles of which are prohibited to be imported in any ships whatever. It is indeed true, that these exceptions, originating in particular feelings

against Holland at the time the acts were passed, have been much reduced by subsequent statutes. But it is equally true, that enough of these jealous restrictions still remains to create embarrassment in trade, and to excite an angry feeling in a friendly people. Many goods are prohibited from Ostend, which may come from Calais; and, more absurdly still, many goods may come from Calais, which would be forfeited, coming from Dunkirk. Again, under the rule of the trade beyond Europe, not being colonial, British ships can bring the produce of such countries from the place of their production, or place of usual shipment, *directly* only. "Hence," as well observed by the able Vice President of the Board of Trade, in his eloquent speech in the House of Commons, upon this subject, "if a British ship finds in an American, an African, or an Asiatic port, articles the produce of any of the other quarters of the world, however convenient for its assortment, or market, such ship is prohibited from receiving and carrying them, under the penalty of confiscation of ship and cargo, on its arrival in a British port." Again, the rule of the European trade confines, as above said, the importation of European produce to British ships, or ships of the country of production. By the effect of this rule, it becomes totally impossi-

ble for a foreign merchant, trading from a port abroad, to send an assorted cargo to a British port, inasmuch as the goods of each country require a separate ship. Such in practice are the main actual inconveniences under our existing navigation laws.

The labors of the Board of Trade, and of its most intelligent President and Vice President, have been directed, in the first instance, to apply a remedy to these particular defects of a system so generally excellent. Accordingly, under a course of persevering industry, a bill will probably be passed in the ensuing session, which will remove these heads of grievance, common to ourselves and foreign nations; and will so simplify the general system of our navigation laws, as greatly to facilitate foreign and domestic commerce. Under the proposed clauses of this bill, the invidious and useless exceptions respecting Holland and the Netherlands, will doubtless be repealed. British ships will be enabled to bring cargoes from any port or place of Asia, Africa, and America, not being colonial, without the useless and mischievous restriction of such cargoes being the produce of the place only from which they are brought. And still more importantly, and with a promise of much future benefit to general

commerce, foreign merchants will be enabled to bring assorted cargoes in the European trade.

The subject next in order and importance is the Warehousing system.

The object of this system, and of the new measures proposed to parliament under it, is to invite the deposit of foreign commodities, of every description, in British warehouses; for the purpose of enabling British and foreign ships, departing from the ports of this country, to take assorted cargoes, and thus to carry on a general exportation trade to every part of the world; subject, however, to the regulations necessary for the security of the revenue, and for preserving to our own manufacturers a just preference in our own markets. If this system be not entirely new, it is new at least in the extent and liberality in which the Board of Trade now proposes its adoption. This depot or transit system was first introduced into practice by the 43d of the late King. But this statute, like all other incipient measures, has a strong infusion of the jealousy of the times in which it was ventured; and whilst it recognises the principle, proceeds with much timidity and hesitation in the practice. Whilst it admits the importation of raw produce and

materials, it excludes under this jealous feeling almost every species of foreign manufactured goods. The reason of this restriction was doubtless in the apprehension of assisting the competition of foreign manufacturers with our own dealers in foreign markets. But the employment of such means for such an end is as nugatory as it is mischievous. It is mischievous, because it deprives us of the incalculable advantage of becoming the general magazine of the world, and of superadding the profits of general trade to those resulting from dealing only in our own manufactures. It is nugatory, because, in the present state of European nations, no prohibitions of this kind can prevent foreigners from supplying themselves from the best mart. The sole security for preference to British manufacturers is in their own superior skill, intelligence, and activity; in their vast accumulated capital, and in a magnitude and quality of machinery, the growth, like our capital, of a hundred years of successful commerce. All other means are accessible by all, and will be employed by all. Under such considerations, it has been the laborious effort of the Board of Trade to relieve the general commerce of the country from this restrictive system, and to awaken our manufacturers to just views of their own

interests. Such is the object of the Warehousing bill.*

The subject next in order and importance for the consideration of the Board was such a new arrangement of the Timber duties, as might reconcile the fair claims of our North American colonists, and our British ship owners, with the interests of general commerce, and with the reasonable expectations of friendly nations. To this subject the Board, in common with his Majesty's ministers, directed its most laborious attention; and the result was the Act of the last session of parliament, by which this object has been effected. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that the former duties upon timber had been imposed in the year 1809, when our naval resources were menaced by the effect of the French decrees. Under these circumstances, an offer had been made to government, by some merchants and ship-owners, to supply the necessary timber from Canada, if the employment of their capital were secured by protecting duties. His Majesty's ministers accepted the offer, but with the distinct understanding, that the du-

* For a more detailed view of the Navigation and Warehousing system, and the proposed amendments, the reader is referred to the most able speech of the Right Hon. T. Wallace, Vice-president of the Board of Trade, made in the House of Commons, June, 1821.

ties should only be temporary; and that upon the conclusion of the war, or the occurrence of another state of things, the continuance or repeal of these duties should be open to the consideration of parliament. Upon this subject, his Majesty's ministers have surely a just claim to the praise of not having sacrificed general principles to the urgency of a temporary embarrassment. Their hands were untied when the occasion was favorable. Accordingly, they were then enabled to consider this system of preference upon its own merits. On the one side, were the interests of the colonists, the capitals of the ship-owners actually employed, and the national objects of our naval resources, and our navigation laws. On the other side, were the undeniable interests of the general-trader, and the fair expectations of the northern powers of Europe. In the recent act of parliament, it is presumed, that these objects are consulted in a degree due to their several importance. It is always a matter of great practical difficulty to repeal a protective system. This difficulty is not wholly removed by the circumstance of Government having acted with due foresight and precaution, and having reserved to itself the full *right* to make the repeal. The difficult question of prudence still intervenes. Much actual capital is necessarily employed; great interests adapt themselves

to existing channels of trade; adventure and speculation imprudently extend their prospect beyond the licensed limit. The boundary itself, depending upon the duration of a fluctuating state of things, is perhaps, as in this case, uncertain; and the error of expatiating beyond the line granted belongs rather to reasonable expectation, than to unwarranted folly. If ministers had to contend with these difficulties, let them rather receive the just praise of having done so much, than incur any reprehension that they have been unable to do more. It is one thing to prune, and another to cut down. It is one thing to perform a simple operation, and another to meddle with a principle or movement in a piece of complicate machinery, so connected in all its joints, that a new modification introduced into one part renders it necessary to carry a new relative adaptation throughout the whole. All amendments in our commercial system are necessarily of this nature. We have not to repair a movement, but to reconstruct a machine.

The next subject of consideration was the possible augmentation of our export trade from and to India. His Majesty's ministers were most anxious to effect this important purpose, and they afforded a most earnest attention to every sober proposal upon it. It is true, that

their expectations were less sanguine than those of the popular advocates for this increase. A large mutual consumption of produce and manufactures can only occur between nations of the same general wants and habits. The largest dealer with a manufacturing nation is, necessarily, a people of the same original habits with itself, but which people, from the effect of some incidental circumstance, are in a different stage of social progress. Hence, the largest customer of England is America; her people having the same objects of comfort, convenience, and luxury, with the natives of Great Britain; but being as yet only in the agricultural state of society, they necessarily find it more profitable to confine their own industry to the growth of raw produce, and to take their manufactures from England. But the relative state of England and the East Indies is precisely the contrary. A people of a temperate latitude, and a people of the tropics; a highly civilized people, and a nearly barbarous people; a people living only on rice, and abstaining from animal food, and a people pursuing luxury through all its endless variety. A people without the means, almost the desire, of applying to any use either the growth of our soil, or the produce of our manufactures. A people, by the immense population of their

country, and the simplicity of their habits, working up their own raw produce so cheaply, as almost to render it a moral miracle, that the machinery of Europe can compete in any slight degree with their hand-work. A people, in fine, to whom the glass, leather, paper, printed goods, earthenware, salt, soap, spirits, wine, cutlery, and woollens of Europe, must be all nearly totally useless. Under such circumstances, it is impossible to anticipate any large consumption amongst the millions of our Indian population. In fact, the main consumption in India of European manufacture is, and always must be, by her own European subjects. But so long as India, under the policy of the Company, shall continue to be a factory, her European consumption will be that of a factory only. It is a waste of words to insist longer upon a principle so obvious. These considerations, doubtless, pressed with a due force upon the minds of his Majesty's ministers. They could not resist the conclusion, that not only under present circumstances, but under circumstances, at least, half a century to come, they must not anticipate any considerable augmentation in our exports to the East Indies. But they deemed it a duty to concede to the sanguine representations of the mercantile and shipping interests. Accordingly,

by a recent act, they have established a direct trade between India and Europe, and have opened it to the private trader as well as to the company. By this measure, they have accomplished all within their power for the possible establishment of an active and adventurous trade, directly from the ports of the East Indies to those of Europe. The treaty with the United States of America, and their admission under that treaty to our ports in the East Indies, had already paved the way for the establishment of this active commerce; and was infusing into our Indian settlements that large mercantile and adventurous spirit, which is possibly the only promising means for the gradual civilization, and for the formation into European habits, of that vast member of our empire. Our own traders became, pardonably enough, but perhaps unreasonably, jealous of the activity of the commerce between India and Europe by means of American vessels. The new act remedies this alleged mischief. Our own traders may now supply Europe directly with the produce of India. In process of time, this opening may lead to important results. But upon such a subject it is impossible to anticipate the events of futurity. There can exist but one wish upon it.

The next head for the consideration of the

Board, was the proposed new system for the equal admission of French wines with those of Portugal. Enough has already been said upon the general nature of this proposition in a former part of these observations. It has been before observed, that the value of the Brazil trade must now be comprehended in that of Portugal; and that the addition of this large component portion of her empire, has raised the value of our Portuguese trade from its former annual value of about six hundred thousand pounds to four millions. Before the opening of the Brazils to British commerce, the annual value of the British exports to Portugal did not reach to half their present amount. Since our free admission into the Brazils, our annual exports under the head of Portuguese trade have attained to four millions.

If the preference of Portugal to France, by the Methuen treaty, were considered as a just policy under the former condition of our Portuguese trade, how much strength has the affirmative of this question received, when, as at present, the introduction of the Brazils into the sphere of British commerce has so greatly augmented the value of this trade.

The trade, moreover, between Great Britain and Portugal does not now stand alone upon the Methuen treaty. The basis of this com-

merce has been enlarged by the treaty with Portugal, of 1810; by an act of parliament passed to confirm it, and by the repeal of certain provisions of our navigation act in order to carry it into effect. By the 51st of George the third, the produce, raw and manufactured, of the Portuguese colonies in South America, is allowed to be imported into Great Britain directly, in their own ships. This is a relaxation of the third section of the Navigation act, which prohibits all importations from the continents of Asia, Africa, and America, except in British built vessels only.

If the advocates for the proposed new system appear to undervalue our commerce with Portugal, they appear equally to over-rate the probable advantages of an augmented mercantile intercourse with France. The experiment has been tried; and if it has not altogether failed, the result has certainly not been such as to recommend an experiment so costly as that of putting to peril our Portuguese and Brazillian commerce.

In 1787, Mr. Pitt actually made the experiment, by a most considerable reduction on the duties of French wines. The sanguine expectations of the British merchants under this new system wholly failed. Under its operation, our exports to France never exceeded

seven hundred thousand pounds annually. The causes of this failure are indeed perfectly intelligible. France has the same common commercial objects with ourselves. Her government has to protect its own manufactures, her silks, her cottons, her woollens, her own hardware, and her own produce. We possess nothing so peculiar to ourselves as are her wines to France; and we have therefore nothing of which France is in either absolute want, or to which her government can give a preference, without a proportionate sacrifice from their own subjects. Under such circumstances, it is nearly impossible that our exports to France can much exceed their actual amount. These reflections have doubtless possessed their due weight upon the Board of Trade, and if nothing has been done under this head, but a most attentive consideration of the reports made by parliamentary committees upon foreign trade, it is because the subject is full of the most extreme difficulty and embarrassment.

Such therefore is the general state of the nation under the several departments in which the public business appears more conveniently to arrange itself. Under the department of Finance, it has been made to appear, that from the year 1816, to the present period, ministers

have persevered in a continued course of reduction and retrenchment. In the year 1816, the total of the annual expenditure for army, navy, ordnance, and miscellaneous, the four main heads of the public annual service, was twenty-four millions, eight hundred and eighty-seven thousand pounds. The total for the same services for 1821 was eighteen millions. A reduction of nearly seven millions annual expenditure. But it is unnecessary to repeat what has been so amply explained in a former part of these observations. Suffice it to say under the summary of finance, that, through every branch of the public service, the retrenchment has been as sincere as effectual. A few weeks only will pass before the country will acknowledge, that this solicitude to reduce the burthens of the people, and to relieve the commerce, agriculture, and manufactures of the kingdom, has not relaxed since the conclusion of the last session of parliament, and that more has since been reduced in every department of the public service, than any reasonable expectation could anticipate. As regards the reduction, indeed, made in one branch of the public service, the difficulties of ministers have possibly changed their aspect. Instead of having to excuse the actual expenditure, they will hereafter have to justify the attempted reduction.

But his Majesty's ministers do not require to be informed, that, under a free constitution like our own, the value of public opinion is not to be overlooked. If it be the character of a light and inconstant mind to be diverted from the performance of grave and invidious duties by a mistaken popular clamor, it is no less a measure of prudence not to undervalue the aid of public opinion. It is equally an extreme to follow wheresoever the popular tempest may drive; or purposely to take a course in its teeth, where both prudence and virtue allow the use of its concurrent aid. It happily belongs to the nature of a free government and an intelligent people, that public opinion is never long misled. What the first statesman, as well as the first orator of the Roman empire, observed of the nature of general truth, is equally just with regard to the particular truths of human conduct:— *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.* Parties and prejudices pass away, whilst the effects of wise and moderate measures necessarily enter into the future weal of the state, and, in their visible good, make an effectual, though perhaps tardy appeal, to the gratitude of a generous nation.

Whilst the administration of the finances is entitled to the praise of a just economy, the in-

tegrity of all the great national resources must excite the warm satisfaction of every well-wisher to his country. Under all the heads of these resources—our foreign trade, our internal trade and manufactures, our internal consumption—and the correspondence of our revenue with our expenditure, the general aspect is such as to excite satisfaction for the present, and a just confidence for the future. Of the three main branches of our foreign commerce, our European trade, our trade with the United States, and our trade with Asia, Africa, and America, not being colonial, the first holds forth an actual considerable increase; the second justifies the expectation of a speedy return to its former large amount; whilst the third already exceeds every reasonable expectation. If we follow the natural order of the component members of our European commerce, our trade with Portugal, including the Brazils, has augmented from two millions to four millions. The political state of Spain has affected in some degree its external relations; but her exclusive tariff has been in great part recalled, and our dealings with her, under the circumstance of our own wool-tax, exceed what could reasonably be anticipated. Our commerce with France, Holland, the Netherlands, and Germany, equals the average

amount of any former year. If our exportation of colonial produce to the continent of Europe be not so great in amount as during some of the war years, and the two years following immediately on the peace, the cause is in the resumption by foreign states of their own colonies. It will be found, however, that our exportation of raw sugar is greatly on the increase; whilst our refined sugars have gradually advanced, since the year 1814, from one million and a half to two millions; and our export of cotton yarn has increased during the same period from little more than one million annually to two millions two hundred thousand pounds. Our brass and copper manufactures have nearly doubled their amount. Our export of iron still retains the Mediterranean market, and, under the effect of a great increasing demand and consumption, both foreign and domestic, is becoming one of the staples of the country, and an almost equal rival of Swedish iron in quality. Our woollen manufactures will be found on an average of the last five years to exceed the like average during the best years of the war; whilst our gross exports of cotton manufactures, now forming our principal export to the continent of Europe as well as to America, have advanced from sixteen to twenty-one millions.

Our commerce with the United States has been necessarily affected by the diminished means of this great consumer. The seller has necessarily suffered by the impaired wealth of the principal buyer. But under the extent and variety of her soil and produce, under the elastic spirit, the unwearied activity, and the invincible industry, of her citizens (the *vis insita originis* of this British scion,) the government of the United States is rapidly returning to its former condition; and as our commerce shared in the late reverses, so is it participating in her happier restoration. The American revenue from customs, in the year 1819, was about seventeen millions of dollars. In 1820 it approached towards twenty millions. Upon making up the accounts to the close of the present year, it may be calculated from all credible report to exceed twenty-two millions. Our commerce with Asia, Africa, and America, not being colonial, though very considerable at present, is still greater in prospect than in possession. Fortune has here thrown up the vast and unbroken field of South American commerce.

The opening of the East India trade, and the recent extension of the privileges of the private traders, have laid the basis of a commerce, which the activity and enterprise of

British merchants will push to an incalculable extent. We see this trade almost in its infancy; but it must not be forgotten, that it was his Majesty's present ministers who opened it to the general merchant.

The general character of our internal trade and manufactures affords a spectacle no less splendid and grateful. The just criterion of their actual condition is in the state of our current consumption. But through every branch of this consumption, whether affecting necessaries, conveniencies, or luxuries, there is the same indisputable argument of the continuing opulence of the country. In tea, coffee, tobacco, malt, and British spirits, salt, leather, candles, soap, bricks, tiles, &c. the current consumption maintains at least the average of former years, and under most of the above heads exceeds it. The proof in detail of this proposition has been given in a former part of these observations. Suffice it here to call the attention of the reader to a most important conclusion:—Of the twenty-six millions annually produced by the excise, the amount of the taxes upon fermented liquors and their materials, added to those of tea, coffee, and tobacco only, exceed twenty millions. Of so much consequence is the continuing domestic consumption of these articles which, though

thus few in amount, exceed by more than two-fold the produce of our customs.

Whilst such is the condition of our foreign commerce, internal trade, manufactures, and revenue, the administration of our foreign relations has in every respect upholden the honor of the country, and confirmed our national security under the general treaties of Europe. In the local contentions of European powers, we have at once respected the independence of nations, and retained entire our own friendly relations. Under a laudable prudence we have contented ourselves with the performance of our own duties, and have seen no obligation unnecessarily to involve the country by the hostile assertion of principles not proportionately affecting ourselves. The event has justified our policy. Our wise forbearance has saved us from the humiliation of a vain ostentation of our power, and from the costly prosecution of remote interests. Under this system, all our foreign relations with friendly states continue unimpaired. In Europe, Asia, and America, we have a voice or a vote proportionate to the dignity of our empire, and to the reputation of our strength, wisdom, and moderation.

Under our Home Department, may it not

be fearlessly asserted by the friends of his Majesty's ministers, that the general aspect of Great Britain, so far as regards the public tranquillity, is every thing which the most ardent lover of his country could desire. The administration of the laws is no longer interrupted by factious clamors against the local magistracy of the country. The essential and strongest interests of all societies, religion, morals, and public peace, are secured by laws, formidable only to the guilty, and operating upon them more by a salutary intimidation and restraint than by an actual application. No one at the present day, either singly by himself, or as the leader of a field-mob, can any longer defy the laws of the state, or calumniate its most sacred institutions. The state, or any of its corporate orders, may apply with security to the juries of the country. If the condition of the sister-kingdom be not equally satisfactory, it is matter perhaps rather of regret for the present than of just apprehension for the future. It is impossible but that her misguided peasantry must shortly return to the protection of a paternal government.

Under the head of the Colonial Department, and the general administration of our shipping and mercantile interests by the Board of Trade,

every person connected with these objects cannot refuse to acknowledge his obligations to his Majesty's ministers. If Canada, in common with the United States, suffer under the operation of our corn-laws, she suffers from the necessity of the supreme government not to sacrifice a greater interest in favor of one of minor consideration. It is not that Canada is sacrificed to Great Britain, but that Great Britain cannot be sacrificed to Canada. Under circumstances of the most obvious policy, we withhold from our Canadian subjects not a right but a grace. But where is the person amongst us, who, under the existing depression of British agriculture, can venture to propose any relaxation of the prohibitory system? If the amount of colonial corn be not considerable, there prevails still a current opinion, mistaken, perhaps, but certainly popular, that any excess in the market, however small, affects the value of the whole quantity in a proportion far greater than its own amount. But there are circumstances, in which it is necessary to concede to impressions probably erroneous, and certainly exceeding the just measure of their causes. Our immense interests in Jamaica are placed in a state of security beyond apprehension. The free ports in Malta and the Mediterranean are extending the

sphere of the colonial markets into the Greek islands and the Turkish empire. Under an intelligent system of administration we are eradicating all the vices of an old vicious government in the Ionian Islands, and are gradually raising that power to a certain station in the political and commercial system of Europe. The Cape of Good Hope holds forth a fair promise of great future advantage, whilst New South Wales already assists the merchants and manufacturers of the mother-country: Her fine wool already excels that of Saxony and Spain, and when assisted by a larger capital, and by a more intelligent culture, may possibly reach the British market at such a moderate price, as greatly to abridge the necessity of foreign importation. The direct trade from India to Europe is receiving every assistance from government and the Board of Control. If we cannot reap all that is expected from the free trade between England and the East Indies, it at least will not be imputed to the indifference or negligence of his Majesty's ministers that we have not got all that we could. But Hope has necessarily a longer reach than Possibility.

The beneficial labors of the Board of Trade will be better understood when they enter more distinctly into our practical system. But

two of the benefits of this branch of the public service to general commerce are sufficiently large, and sufficiently above the surface, to appeal with effect to every mercantile eye. The enlargement of the transit and warehousing system; the opening of the ports of the country, so as to render them the depot and emporium of foreign commodities of every kind; the assisting our own merchants to take assorted cargoes of foreign and domestic goods, and the enabling foreign merchants to employ our ship-owners as carriers of foreign produce from British ports, will be most important contributions to the general commerce of the country, and must greatly extend our navigation and carrying trade, and the sale and consumption of our own manufactures. The consolidation and simplification of our Navigation Laws, with the revision and suppression of some of the obsolete enactments, will equally facilitate mercantile business at home, and conciliate the good-will of foreigners. A third object of the recent labors of this Board—a revision of the lights, harbour-dues, and pilotage, and, in due time, of the dock-system, which now press so heavily both upon British and foreign shipping, will, it is presumed, become a boon equally acceptable to the mercantile and shipping interests.

A last effort of the Board of Trade, in concurrence with the ministers, who direct and assist its operations, and in which it is to be hoped they will succeed in the course of the ensuing session, is the revision and amendment of the prohibitory system in general, and the substitution of protecting duties in exchange for the existing actual prohibitions. This object, or the attempt at least, has long been in favor with every good and moral man, and possesses the strong recommendation of being equally adapted to advance the interests of our revenue, and to cut off a source of much vice and misery. Under the known operation of wealth and luxury, and of the vanity and emulation to which they lead, prohibitions of articles of foreign manufacture excite only a more determined purpose to possess them. Their cost renders them a distinction, and vanity is, perhaps, as coarse as hunger in its food and fuel. The difficulty enhances only the price, and the large reward creates and animates the spirit of smuggling. Hence the prohibition is productive of little other consequence, as regards the high and opulent classes, but that of exciting in them a spirit in opposition to itself; and of creating, maintaining, and highly rewarding, the criminal occupation of the smuggler, and all the im-

moral habits connected with a life of outrage against the laws. But substitute protecting duties, and you avoid all this mischief, and at the same time effect the object of the prohibition. The opulent classes will pay the high prices under the protecting duties, as they pay the smuggler, but the revenue will gain the advantage, and not the illicit trader. The fair dealer loses nothing, as, under the prohibiting or protecting system, the present consumers will equally have the articles; and under both can have them only at the same high price; but the government and the public morals gain. Smuggling must nearly cease, and with it the large cost of the present preventive system.

Such, therefore, is the general condition of public affairs with which we have to enter upon the commencement of a new year.

After this brief and plain statement of what has been done, and what has been omitted, and through what difficulties, and under what embarrassments, is it too much for a candid observer to conclude, that his Majesty's ministers are fully entitled to the praise of a zealous performance of all their public duties; and are so much the more justly entitled to this praise from a generous and discerning public, inasmuch as they have themselves declined to

vindicate or assert their just and obvious claims. Is it too much to say, that there is something peculiarly grateful to the English character in this effectual prosecution of business without pretension—in this sober, steady, victory over the most appalling difficulties, without the levity and vanity of a triumph? Is it unreasonable to express a confident assurance, that the future annalist, if not the passing generation, will recognize the public obligation to the ministers of George the Fourth, and will hereafter enumerate them among those wise and substantial, but unpretending and untalking benefactors, who in times of great peril and difficulty—in times of much vapouring and frothiness—when every popular leader has his new measure, and all the infinite variety of political wisdom is reduced into theories—when every one assumes to be the builder of a system, and every stone is marked with the builder's name—when British officers follow in the train of a mob against the police of the country, and wise men come from the East to shew how cheaply a nation can be governed—is it too much to claim for his Majesty's ministers the praise of those, who, *nihil non agentes quod reipublicæ necesse fuit, et sine ulla ostentatione agendi,* deserve the more applause from others, as, under the most

unequivocal public services, they least assume it for themselves. *De Agrippa et Mæcenate qui postea judicabunt, sentiendum et prædicandum est, vix quosque reperiri posse, qui, in tantis rerum periculis, tam multa et magna, et cum tam minimâ perturbatione hominum atque rerum, pro Senatu Populoque Romano, re atque actu fecerunt.*

THE END.

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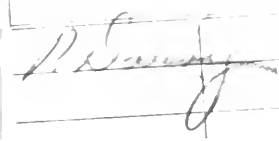

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